April 21, 1975

THE NEW YORKER

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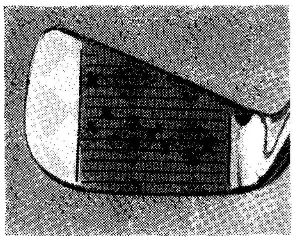
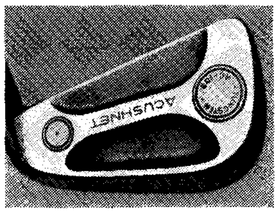


No other club has applied the strict combination of scientific research and physics Titleist has. (And they won't either, because Titleist has the patent pending.)

Titleist's increased power area.

Research showed us most "misses" occur in the higher toe and lower heel areas. By adding weight, in the form of tungsten inserts, in these two spots, we were able to create a power area stretching right across the club. (The weights reduce twisting caused by off-center hits, thus giving you back most of the distance and accuracy you would normally lose.) And not only do you get improved distance and accuracy when you miss with a Titleist iron, you even get that "solid feel."



Refinements.

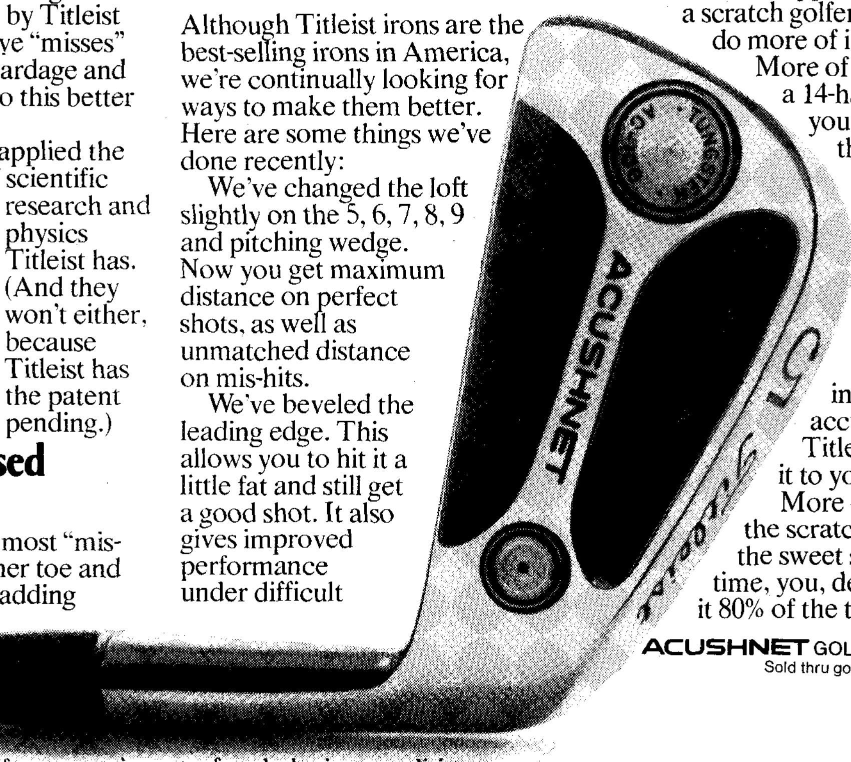
Although Titleist irons are the best-selling irons in America, we're continually looking for ways to make them better. Here are some things we've done recently:

We've changed the loft slightly on the 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and pitching wedge. Now you get maximum distance on perfect shots, as well as unmatched distance on mis-hits.

We've beveled the leading edge. This allows you to hit it a little fat and still get a good shot. It also gives improved performance under difficult turf and playing conditions.

We've contoured the soles so you can ground the clubs on any line.

And we've provided offset. This allows you to start out with your hands ahead of the ball, so you'll be sure to *end up* with your hands ahead of the ball at the moment of impact.



A word to the 14-handicapper.

Titleist irons do the same thing for a 14-handicapper they do for a scratch golfer. They just do more of it more often.

More of it: If you're a 14-handicapper, you usually miss the sweet spot by a greater margin than the scratch golfer. You need an even bigger boost in yardage and accuracy. And Titleist irons give it to you.

More often: Where the scratch golfer misses the sweet spot 59% of the time, you, dear friend, miss it 80% of the time.

ACUSHNET GOLF EQUIPMENT
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Titleist irons improve most of your shots. The perfect ones they leave alone.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Absurd Person Singular—Alan Ayckbourn is a master of farce, and this play about the horrors of married life will make you laugh from start to finish. With Larry Blyden, Carole Shelley, Geraldine Page, Fritz Weaver, Sandy Dennis, and Tony Roberts. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 246-4636. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Action—A play by Sam Shepard, together with his "Killer's Head," a short monologue. Season subscribers only. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 247-0393. Mondays at 6:15; Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30; and Fridays and Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2. Closes Saturday, May 3.)

Alice in Wonderland—A two-week return engagement of André Gregory's startling and outrageous production, with no Freudian implication overlooked, and with many references to drugs. The Caterpillar scene is very funny, and the Mad Tea Party is truly mad. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 677-6350. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Closes Saturday, April 26.)

All God's Chillun Got Wings—A revival of a poor play by O'Neill. With Trish Van Devere and Robert Christian, directed by George C. Scott. (Circle in the Square, Broadway at 50th St. 581-0720. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

All Over Town—The director, Dustin Hoffman, tries to rescue Murray Schisgal's inept play, but in vain. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 246-5969. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Constant Wife—Ingrid Bergman in a four-week engagement of Maugham's comedy. Directed by John Gielgud. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 246-5990. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2. Closes Saturday, May 10.)

Dance with Me—The grim days and happy daydreams of a young New York nebbish. A comedy with music, well played by the La Mama Plexus Company. (Mayfair, 235 W. 46th St. 391-0063. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5.)

Diamond Studs—A country-and-Western version of a life of Jesse James; the life doesn't bear close examination but is great fun to listen to. In a cabaret setting. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays and Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

A Doll's House—Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston star in a clumsy production of Ibsen's tract on women's liberation. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 362-7616. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2. Closes Sunday, April 20.)

Equity Library Theatre—Maxim Gorky's play **The Zykovs** is the seventh in this season's series of eight productions. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly at 8. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 2:30. Closes Sunday, April 20. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Equus—A brilliant psychological whodunit by Peter Shaffer, beautifully acted by Anthony Hopkins, Peter Firth, Frances Sternhagen, Marian Seldes, Roberta Maxwell, and Michael Higgins. The director is John Dexter. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 246-9156. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The First Breeze of Summer—The Negro Ensemble Company has opened its season with a wonderful production of Leslie Lee's interesting play about a crucial weekend in the lives of a fairly prosperous black family. Under Douglas Turner Ward's masterly direction, all the acting is good, and that of Frances Foster, Moses Gunn, a young man called Reyno, and Mr. W. himself especially so. (St. Marks Playhouse, 133 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. OR 4-3530. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3:30 and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, April 27.)

Ghosts and **The Measures Taken**—The Ibsen play, translated by Rolf Fjelde: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. . . . ¶ The Brecht play, translated by Eric Bentley: Sundays at 3 and 7:30. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 677-6350.)

Goodtime Charley—Joel Grey and Ann Reinking are so delightful in this highly implausible tale of Joan of Arc and her timid Dauphin that one forgives every gaucherie. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

In Praise of Love—Rex Harrison, Julie Harris, and Martin Gabel make Terence Rattigan's little play about marriage in the middle years seem far more substantial than it really is. (Morosco, 215 W. 45th St. 246-6230. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

James Joyce's Dubliners—A play by J. W. Riordan, taken from Joyce's early writings and Stanislaus Joyce's biography, "My Brother's Keeper." (Roundabout Stage One, 333 W. 23rd St. 924-7160. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2. Closes Saturday, May 3.)

A Matter of Time—A musical with a book by Hap Schlein and Russell Leib, music and lyrics by Philip F. Margo, and a cast headed by Joe Masiell and Glory Van Scott. Directed by Tod Jackson. Previews through Sunday, April 20. Opens officially on Monday, April 21. (Playhouse, 357 W. 48th St. 541-9820. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 7. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Misanthrope—A botched version of the stern Molière comedy, with startling performances by Alec McCowen and Diana Rigg. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 695-5858. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Philemon—A tenderhearted, overlong musical about a clown in Antioch, some two thousand

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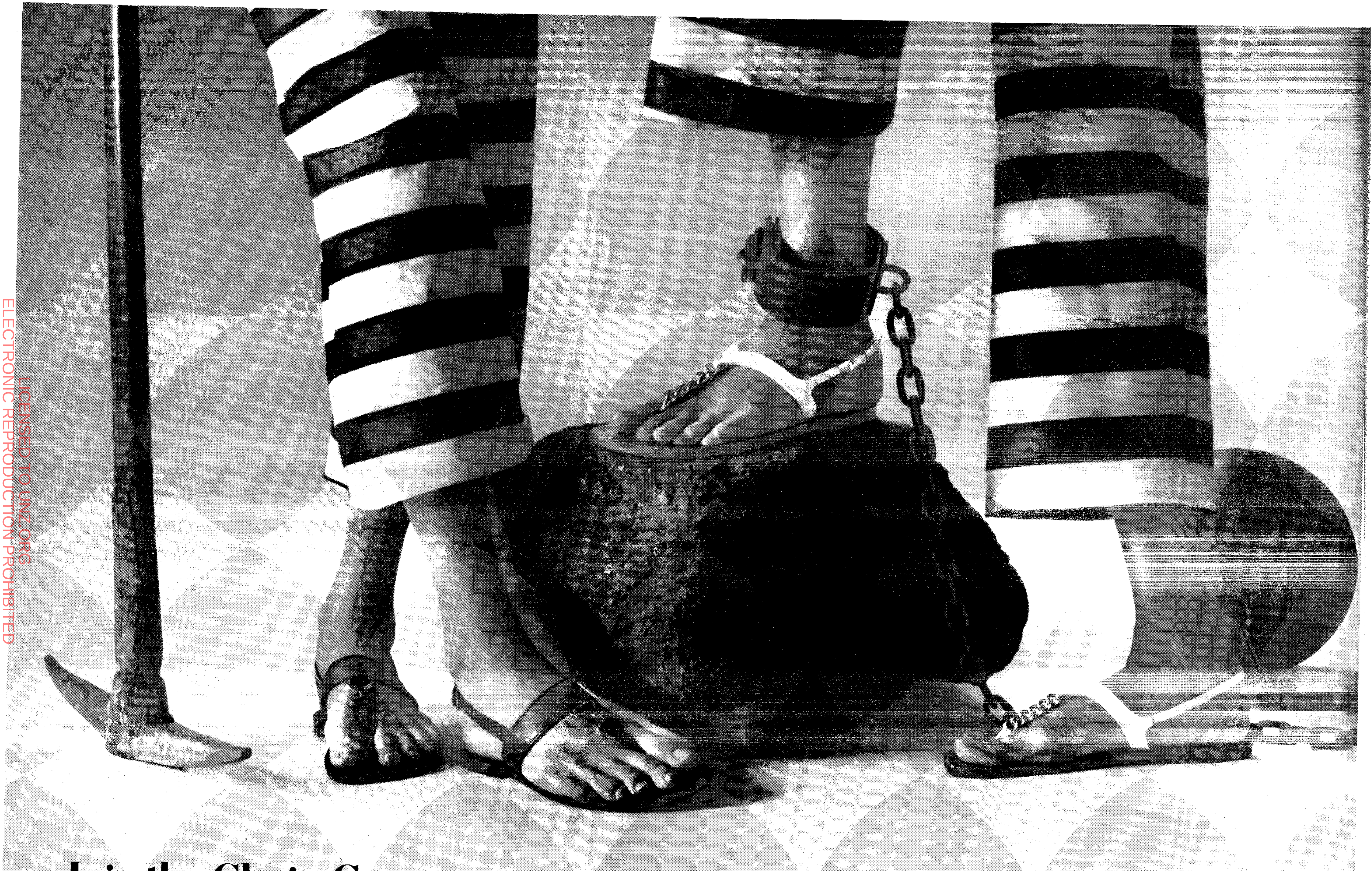

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BERNARDO

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

years ago. By Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt, who wrote "The Fantasticks." (Portfolio Studio, 341 W. 47th St. 246-6755. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Private Lives—But of course. With Maggie Smith, John Standing, Remak Ramsey, and Niki Flacks. Directed by John Gielgud. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-4271. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2. Closes Saturday, April 26.)

P.S. Your Cat Is Dead!—A comedy by James Kirkwood, about an out-of-work actor and what amounts to an out-of-work burglar and how they turn from being adversaries to being near bedmates. With Keir Dullea and Tony Musante. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 246-6740. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Ritz—High jinks in a low homosexual bathhouse. Terrence McNally's farce is much easier to laugh at than to describe. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 246-5639. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursdays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Same Time, Next Year—A slick and sentimental comedy about happy marriages and a single, twenty-five-year-long, happy adultery, practiced annually. With Ellen Burstyn and Charles Grodin. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 245-3430. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

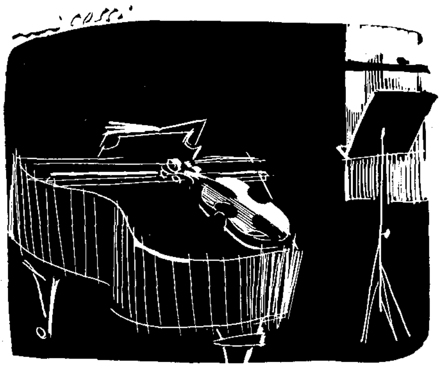
Shenandoah—Hokum, though John Cullum sings bravely and well. (Alvin, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Sherlock Holmes—Frank Dunlop's hilarious guying of the Doyle-Gillette classic, with John Wood as Holmes and Clive Revill as the infamous Professor Moriarty. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 246-6699. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Sizwe Banzi Is Dead and **The Island**—John Kani and Winston Ntshona in two South African plays imported from London. Devised by Athol Fugard (who also directed) and by the Messrs. Kani and Ntshona. **SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD,** a blistering indictment of the inhuman treatment of blacks in South Africa. Tuesdays and Thursdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3. . . . ¶ In **THE ISLAND,** two black prisoners of the South African state outwit torture and death by means of brotherly affection and invincible courage. Wednesdays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 5:30. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164.)

The Wiz—An elaborate and mostly successful version of "The Wizard of Oz," with an all-black cast of great talent. Directed by Geoffrey Holder, who also did the costumes. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 246-0730. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**CANDIDE:** A revival, in much altered form, of the 1956 original, with Leonard Bernstein's score and Richard Wilbur's lyrics. Harold Prince directed the inventive, lively performance. Be prepared to climb up ramps and steps to find a seat. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 247-7992. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 6,233 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **GODSPELL:** A musical adaptation of the Book of Matthew, and once a numbing prologue is over, it becomes a joyful celebration of theatre itself. Songs by Stephen Schwartz. (Promenade, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. 799-7690. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 7:30, and Saturdays at 6 and 9. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **GREASE:** A musical (score, book, and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey) that parodies, by faithful imitation, the songs and dances of the nineteen-fifties. The young cast performs capably and with spirit. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 245-5760. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE HOT L BALTIMORE:** Lanford Wilson's play about the assorted seedy residents of a once good hotel, now shabby and threatened by bulldozers, is synthetic and sugary, but it is quite entertaining, too. (Circle in the Square, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 9; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE MAGIC SHOW:** A wretched musical, but the magic tricks by Doug Henning make up for it all. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 489-6392. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **PIPPIN:** A great big show that ably conceals a tiny little musical. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 265-2412. Nightly, except Sundays, at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **RAISIN:** Worth seeing for its appealing and gifted cast, though the book of the musical is as old-fashioned as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 586-5555. Wednesdays through Fridays at 7:30; Saturdays at 8; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26

MISCELLANY

The Circus—Whatever happened to the old steam calliope? (Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Tuesdays at 10 and 2:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 1:30 and 7:30; Saturdays at 10:30, 3, and 8; and Sundays at 1:15 and 5:30. Closes Monday, May 26.)

Kyogen, the National Comic Theatre of Japan—A company of ten in a program of three short plays. (Carnegie Hall. CI 7-7459. Wednesday and Thursday, April 16-17, at 8.)

Oba Koso—A Yoruba folk opera (in Yoruba), by and with Duro Ladipo. (Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Thursday and Friday, April 17-18, at 8, and Saturday, April 19, at 2:30 and 8.)

Magic Show—The annual "Salute to Magic," put on by the Society of American Magicians. (Hunter College Assembly Hall, Park Ave. at 69th St. Saturday, April 19, at 8:15. For tickets, call 541-7290.)

BALLET AND DANCE

Alvin Ailey City Center Dance Theatre—Wednesday evening, April 16, and Saturday evening, April 19: "The Road of the Phoebe Snow," "Cry," "The Mooche" (première), and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Thursday and Friday evenings, April 17-18, and Sunday evening, April 20: "Dance for Six," "Love Songs," "After Eden" (company première), and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Saturday and Sunday matinées, April 19-20: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, April 22, and Thursday evening, April 24: "Night Creature" (première), "Portrait of Billie," "Feast of Ashes," and "Hidden Rites." . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, April 23, and Friday evening, April 25: "Blues Suite," "Love Songs," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, April 26: "Blues Suite," "The Road of the Phoebe Snow," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, April 26: "Night Creature," "Portrait of Billie," "Feast of Ashes," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Evenings at 7:30. Matinées at 2. Closes Sunday, May 4.)

Bolshoi Ballet—Opening performances of a five-week engagement that will run through Saturday, May 24—"Spartacus" (American première): Tuesday, April 22, at 7, as well as Wednesday, April 23, and Friday and Saturday, April 25-26, all at 8. . . . ¶ "Giselle": Thursday, April 24, at 8 (American première of a full-length version), and Saturday, April 26, at 2. (Metropolitan Opera House. 787-3880.)

Dance Theatre of Harlem—Opening performances of a three-week engagement that will run through Sunday, May 11—Tuesday evening, April 22: A benefit performance entitled "The Evolution of an Idea," with Marian Anderson, Brock Peters, Cicely Tyson, Aretha Franklin, and Shirley Verrett, plus the senior and junior companies of the Dance Theatre of Harlem. (For tickets, call 690-3189.) . . . ¶ Wednesday and Thursday evenings, April 23-24, and Saturday evening, April 26: "Holberg Suite," "Don Quixote Pas de Deux" (company première), "Agon," and "Dougla." . . . ¶ Friday evening, April 25, and Saturday matinée, April 26: "Design for Strings," "Every Now and Then" (première), "Bugaku" (company première), and "Forces of Rhythm." (Uris Theatre, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2.)

Manuel Alum Dance Company—"Sextetrahedron," "East—to Nijinsky," "Era," "Yemaya," and "Deadlines." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Thursday, April 17, at 7:30; Friday and Saturday, April 18-19, at 8; and Sunday, April 20, at 2.)

Juilliard Dance Ensemble—A program of new works by Anna Sokolow, Kazuko Hirabayashi, and José Limón (a work reconstructed and completed by Daniel Lewis), performed by students of the Juilliard dance department, with the Juilliard Chamber Ensemble conducted by Teo Macero. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Saturday, April 26, at 8; Sunday, April 27, at 3; and Monday, April 28, at 8. For tickets, call 799-5000, Ext. 235.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing.)

MOSTLY FOR MUSIC

(A few of the notable performers now in town.)

Rashied Ali—Studio 77 / Ali's Alley, 77 Greene St., between Spring and Broome Sts. (226-9042). Drums, leading a quartet, from ten to three. Thursdays through Sundays.

Chet Baker—Stryker's, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754). Trumpet, leading a combo. Mondays and Tuesdays, from nine-thirty to two.

Jaki Byard—Five Spot, 2 St. Marks Pl., just east of Third Ave. (730-9270). Piano, leading the Music Complex Jazz Orchestra. Sundays, from five to nine. . . . ¶ Bradley's, 70 University Pl. (228-6440). With bassist Major Holley, from nine-thirty on Sundays.

Roy Eldridge—Jimmy Ryan's, 154 W. 54th St. (CO 5-9505). Trumpet, with Bobby Pratt, Cyril Haynes (Mondays through Wednesdays), Dick Katz (Thursdays through Saturdays), Major Holley, Joe Muranyi, and Eddie Locke. Nine-thirty to three every night but Sunday.

Sonny Greer, Russell Procope, and Brooks Kerr—Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220). Drums, reeds, and piano, respectively. Wednesdays through Sundays, from nine-thirty to three.

Tiny Grimes—West End Café, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750). Guitar, leading a trio, from nine to one, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Roy Haynes—Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832). Drums, leading the Hip Ensemble, a quintet, Friday and Saturday, April 18-19, from ten to three.

Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Band—Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011). Mondays at ten.

Lee Konitz—Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220). Alto saxophone, with bassist

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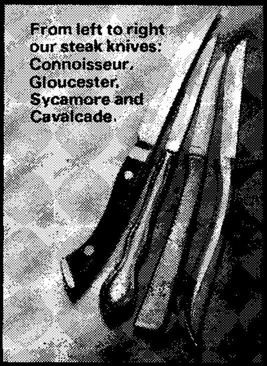
Which means it might make sense for you to learn a new skill. Carving.



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Its regular price is $3.95. But if you enclose a check or money order for $2.75 to Carvel Hall, Crisfield, Maryland 21817, we'll send the book to you.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Lisle Atkinson and pianist Dick Katz. Mondays and Tuesdays, from ten to three.

Dave Matthews—Five Spot, 2 St. Marks Pl., just east of Third Ave. (730-9270). Piano, leading a twelve-piece band. Mondays, from nine-thirty to two.

Lloyd McNeill—Tin Palace, 325 Bowery, at 2nd St. (674-0566). Flute, with Cecil McBee, Dom Salvador, and Buddy Williams, Fridays and Saturdays, from ten-thirty.

Mabel Mercer—Mabel Mercer Room, in the St. Regis-Sheraton, Fifth Ave., at 55th St. (PL 3-4500). Songs. Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight.

Charles Mingus—Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011). Bass, leading a quintet. At ten, through Sunday, April 20.

Odetta—Reno Sweeney, 126 W. 13th St. (691-0900). Singing, beginning Tuesday, April 22, at nine and midnight.

Sy Oliver—Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-9090). Trumpet, leading his orchestra, from seven, nightly, except Sundays.

Bobby Short—Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (RH 4-1600). Singing and playing piano. Tuesdays through Saturdays, from nine-forty-five.

Patti Smith—C.B.G.B., 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052). Rock-and-roll songs and poems, with a backup band; Thursdays through Sundays, from about ten-thirty.

Sylvia Syms—Rick's Café Américain, in the Casablanca, Madison Ave. at 38th St. (683-5860). Vocals, backed by a combo. Wednesday through Sunday, April 16-20, at nine-thirty and midnight.

Cecil Taylor—Five Spot, 2 St. Marks Pl., just east of Third Ave. (730-9270). Piano, with drummer Andrew Cyrille and saxophonist Jimmy Lyons, from nine-thirty to two, except Mondays.

Wendy Waldman—Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300). Singing and playing piano, guitar, and dulcimer. Friday through Sunday, April 18-20, at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Chuck Wayne and Joe Puma—Stryker's, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754). Guitar duo. Sundays, from nine until two.

Dick Wellstood—Cookery, 21 University Pl., at 8th St. (OR 4-4450). Piano, from eight to one, except Sundays.

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(A few places where the notable performers, and others, are performing.)

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (CH 2-9468)—At the rear of this long and narrow, shabbily genteel barroom, Mabel Godwin sits at a piano from nine to three Tuesdays through Saturdays, obligingly singing and playing patrons' requests or whatever pops into her head. On Mondays: five or six part-time but nonetheless exuberant Dixieland musicians known as the Grove Street Stompers. Closed Sundays.

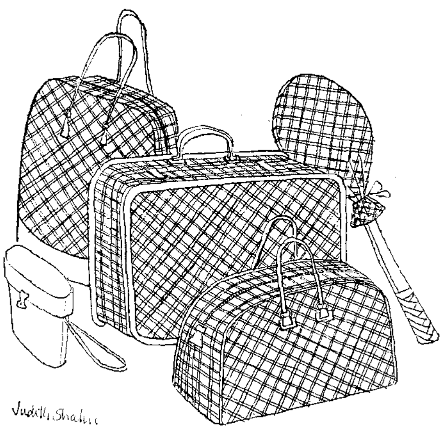
Boomer's, 340 Bleecker St., at Christopher St. (243-0245)—Easygoing, comfortable, and on the less beaten, western edge of Bleecker, this restaurant specializes in mainstream and out-there jazz and sixties-fashionable soul food. Lyrical and heavily bop-influenced alto saxophonist Charles McPherson leads a quintet through Saturday, April 19. On Monday and Tuesday, April 21-22, saxophonist Buddy Terry heads up a quartet. Music from nine-forty-five to three. Closed Sundays.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—An aptly named, giant-size concern where hordes of enthusiasts come to hear the latest in rock, folk, and commercially successful jazz. Luther Allison, Motown's slick version of a Chicago-blues player, trades sets with Headhunters, a progressive disco-jazz quintet created in Herbie Hancock's image. through Thursday, April 17. Friday through Sunday, April 18-20, multitalented Shawn Phillips alternates with Wendy Waldman, a lively young singer from southern California, whose onstage demeanor suggests a still skittish, inexperienced Earth Mother. Many of the more than a hundred and fifty songs she has written are first-rate and original, and her lyrics are never embarrassing. She is most effective as a live performer of her own material—projecting a loose, direct, unpretentious, spontaneous style that, unfortunately, is lacking on her records, which suffer from overproduction. Tuesday and Wednesday, April 22-23, Proctor and Bergman, two Firesign Theatre exes, share the bill with folk-rock singer Tom Waits. Jazz guitarist Pat Martino brings in his band to work opposite electronic-jazz-rock saxophonist and Miles Davis-alumnus Dave Liebman and his musical collective, Lookout Farm, beginning Thursday, April 24. Shows at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Closed Monday, April 21. Dinner.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl. (228-6440)—Pianist Mike Abene and bassist Mike Moore perform in this animated, crowded, buzzing, wood-panelled bar; through Saturday, April 19. Pianist John Bunch and bassist Joe Williams are here Monday, April 21, and Bernie Leighton takes charge of the keyboard, starting Tuesday, April 22. Mondays through Saturdays from nine-thirty to two-thirty. Sundays, from nine-thirty to one, are devoted to Jaki Byard, who, in the course of a single set, might duplicate the styles of James P. Johnson, Earl Hines, Bud Powell, and Béla Bartók. His trusty sidekick, Major Holley, a Slam Stewart-inspired bassist, slaps, bows, and hums along. Dinner.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (RH 4-1600)—The classics of the twenties and thirties may be increasingly ill-used elsewhere, but in the **CAFÉ CARLYLE** they remain in safe hands. Bobby Short, who has been singing them in a respectful and energetic voice for years, and who has lately been known to slip into this venerable repertoire such up-to-the-minute matter as "Send in the Clowns," is assisted by Dick Sheridan and Beverly Peer on drums and bass Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-forty-five, eleven-thirty, and one. Dinner and supper. . . . ¶ Muriel Roberts, an industrious and swinging pianist, has taken over in the **BEMELMANS BAR,** which appears to have become a permanent music room. Mondays through Thursdays from nine to twelve-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays from nine to one.

C.B.G.B., 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A mid-sixties-seedy, neo-Bowery bar and, through Sunday, April 27, the only place to see Patti Smith. Miss Smith, an unrefined, hard-edged poet, singer, actress, and composer, comes on as a female (but by no means feminine) incarnation of Dylan, Lou Reed, and rock and roll in general. Though she still looks like a portrait of the artist in a bread line—her outfit remains a simple baggy black blazer, tight black pants, and a stretched-out tattered T-shirt—her repertoire has grown and will, no doubt, please greater numbers, and her energy burns on. A back-to-simplicity rock band called Television opens the show with old-fashioned, unaffected sixties tunes like "Fire Engine," a big hit in Austin, Texas, in 1965. Perhaps New York is ready. Thursdays through Sundays after ten-thirty.



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Cookery, 21 University Pl., at 8th St. (OR 4-4450)—Despite the superbly visible models they had at hand—Earl Hines, Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Willie the Lion—the Dixieland pianists of the thirties and forties were a depressing lot. They clogged the ensembles with dispirited harmonies and double-chinned rhythms, and their solos died damply. There were and are exceptions—the late and brilliant, if generally sozzled, Joe Sullivan; His Airiness, Jess Stacy, now largely retired; the Russian-born Art Hodes, who still makes the blues, which color all he plays, sound like a keening Dostoevski invention; the furioso Welsh pianist Dill Jones; and the brimming and astute Greenwich-born Dick Wellstood, who, with his moppish hair and beamish mien, will be at the Cookery until the end of May. Wellstood has probably worked more often with blacks than with whites (with such masters as Sidney Bechet, Henry Allen, and Rex Stewart), and, as a result, he suffered for a long time from a dislocation known as "white boy from Greenwich," which made his playing retiring and concave. But several years ago he at last freed himself, and it is clear that he is well and burgeoning. It has been said that he has no style of his own—that he collects the shards of Stacy, Waller, Johnson, Zez Confrey, Wesley Wallace, Scott Joplin, and many more. This is not altogether true. Johnny Guarnieri, the West Coast stunt pianist, can do Waller and Count Basie and Teddy Wilson so that you can *hear* Waller, Basie, and Wilson. But Wellstood is far more subtle and inventive. Without settling into any flashing, immediately identifiable attack, he invaluably reproduces the raw materials—the emotions, the rhythmic patterns, the harmonic strengths—that the old master pianists quarried their styles out of. When he plays James P.'s soaring stride piece, "Carolina Shout," he delves into it and then distills it, rather than merely aping it. So, too, with his treatments of Waller, whom he admires a good deal, and Joplin and Duke Jordan and Duke Ellington. He is a funny, articulate, original man, and these qualities also lead him into such byways as Roy Bargy's 1922 "Jim Jams;" Waller's chuckling, seductive "Viper's Drag;" and Joe Raposo's "Rubber Ducky," from "Sesame Street." And he is currently contemplating Victor Herbert's waltzes. He is playing by himself, which is as it should be; bass players simply bounce off his left hand. From eight until one every night except Sunday, when Dick Hyman takes over. Dining.

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Eddie Condon's, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—The third version, and an attractive one. The house band is made up of Ed Polcer, Vic Dickenson, Herbie Hall, Jim Andrews, Red Balaban (a bassist and the owner of the club), and Cliff Leeman. On Tuesday, April 22, pianist Dick Hyman and trumpeter Johnny Glasel sit in with the regulars. Dill Jones, ruddy-faced and nimble-fingered, mans the piano beginning Monday, April 21, from five to nine.

Five Spot, 2 St. Marks Pl., just east of Third Ave. (730-9270)—Little changed in some twenty years, except, perhaps, for a red-and-white specimen of campaign-button art, nearly three feet in diameter, emblazoned with "FIVE SPOT" and hanging on the wall behind the bandstand. Cecil Taylor, who has sequestered his Unit in the concert hall for some time, has settled into these quarters, where he made history some fifteen years ago—the last time he was here. With drummer Andrew Cyrille and saxophonist Jimmy Lyons (and, possibly, others) on hand, Taylor seats himself at a presumably insured piano and renews his quest for what he has referred to as the "really supreme Africanization of Western music." Tuesdays through Sundays after nine-thirty. On Mondays: Dave Matthews' twelve-piece band, made up of studio musicians who range from their twenties to their forties. Music from nine-thirty to two. On Sundays from five to nine: The Music Complex Jazz Orchestra, also made up of studio musicians. It has trouble with intona-

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tion, time, and some slow readers, but it also has enthusiasm and several impressive soloists. The pianist Jaki Byard acts as the leader. Chinese and American snacks.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—The senior member of the threesome that plays swing tunes in this tiny bar is Sonny Greer, who worked with Duke Ellington for more than thirty years, beginning in 1919. Russell Procope carries out his duties on the alto saxophone and clarinet with the gusto and smooth finesse that typified Ellington reeds (he joined Ellington in 1945). Twenty-three-year-old Brooks Kerr, a stride stylist and an Ellington scholar, sits at the piano between Greer and Procope, and helps generate the excitement. Wednesdays through Sundays from nine-thirty to three. Alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, bassist Lisle Atkinson, and pianist Dick Katz take over Mondays and Tuesdays, from ten to three. Vibraharpist Warren Chiasson, who has spent considerable time with George Shearing's group, plays from six to nine Mondays through Saturdays. Pianist Al Haig, guitarist Jimmy Raney, and bassist John Beal collaborate on Sundays from four-thirty to nine-thirty. Snacks.

Jacques at the Village Corner, 142 Bleecker St., at LaGuardia Pl. (473-9762)—The operations at Jacques, a little retreat formerly in business farther west down Bleecker, have been transferred to the Village Corner, a pentagonal, high-ceilinged corner bar with an abundance of old, dark wood and mirrors. Lance Hayward is seated at the keyboard every night but Wednesday, when pianist Jim Roberts substitutes. On Sundays, Jane Valentine contributes vocals. Music from nine-thirty to three.

Jimmy Ryan's, 154 W. 54th St. (CO 5-9505)—Roy Eldridge is sixty-four, his hair is whitish, and he wears thick glasses, but the old drive is still there, even if it doesn't generally appear until midnight. His accompanists—Dick Katz or Cyril Haynes on piano, Eddie Locke on drums, Major Holley on bass, Joe Muranyi on reeds, and Bobby Pratt on trombone—provide camouflage for Eldridge during the early part of the evening and ballast during the later part. Music from nine-thirty to three. On Sundays, Max Kaminsky is in charge of a group of musical archivists from eight until two.

Mabel Mercer Room, in the St. Regis-Sheraton, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. (PL 3-4500)—A portrait of the artist at seventy-five, which Mabel Mercer has just gracefully turned. Everything is just right—the voice (despite its ups and downs), the phrasing, the wonderful songs, her regal good looks, and the newly christened room itself. Jimmy Lyon's accompaniment is calm and fatherly. She radiates—which is what she really does now—at ten and midnight, Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Actor Michael Moriarty, now playing the roles of singer and pianist, leads a trio that includes Ron Traxler on drums and Jay Leonhart on bass; through Saturday, April 19. On Tuesday, April 22, pianist and composer Matt Dennis, who is responsible for "Angel Eyes," "Let's Get Away from It All," "Will You Still Be Mine?," and others, arrives with drummer Bob Rosengarden, bassist Milt Hinton, and vocalist Ginny Dennis. Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine-fifteen to one. Then, on Mondays, from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen comes and goes, talking of Lorenzo Tio. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A restaurant on the tag end of a one-story, mall-like building that also houses a five-and-ten and other shops, and that looks like an afterthought sitting in the midst of upper West Side high-rise urban renewal. Bassist Gordon Edwards takes a capable quintet through some refined, unadulterated, and intricately laid-back rhythm and blues Wednesday and Thursday, April 16-17, and Sunday through Wednesday, April 20-23. Friday and Saturday, April 18-19, have been turned over to Roy Haynes and his spirited quintet. Music from ten until three.

Music Room, 2871 Broadway, at 111th St. (866-2018)—The greatest hits of the fifteenth century—and some occasional ragtime, folk, and atonal music thrown in—are likely to be heard in this modest little restaurant and bar from seven until eleven. Many of the young professional musicians and singers who are here to display their skills (which vary in degree) in small ensembles or as soloists normally perform with such musical monoliths as the New York City Opera Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and the American Symphony Orchestra. A basket placed near the front of the dining room serves as a kitty, where patrons—mostly Columbia-area residents and upper West Side musicians—can drop contributions. Solo lutanists, pianists, singers, and guitarists abound during the week; Fridays and Saturdays are reserved for chamber trios.

Reno Sweeney, 126 W. 13th St. (691-0900)—Margaret Whiting sings in this pleasant mishmash of glitter, business suits, and blue-jeans at nine and midnight through Saturday, April 19. On Tuesday, April 22, Odetta, who has been a powerful blues interpreter for some time, begins doing some rock and country tunes. On Sunday, April 20, Mercedes Hall sings at nine and eleven. Mondays are showcases for new talent. Dining.

Rick's Café Américain, in the Casablanca, Madison Ave. at 38th St. (683-5860)—Sylvia Syms is a nervy singer, and one is never sure what a night may bring. It doesn't matter: when she wars with herself, she is eloquent and instructive, and when she is of a piece she is magnificent. Wednesdays through Sundays at nine-thirty and midnight.

St. James Infirmary, 22 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (675-1343)—A jazz hideaway situated in a properly sombre basement but with an uplifting décor—a colorful wall of Art Deco cutouts and bright, white tablecloths. Pianist Hod O'Brian, bassist Cameron Brown, and drummer Beaver Harris form the house rhythm section for the following travelling saxophonists: tenorman Charlie Rouse on Wednesday and Thursday, April 16-17; baritone player Pepper Adams Friday through Sunday, April 18-20; and tenor player Al Cohn beginning Wednesday, April 23. Music from about ten. Closed Tuesdays.

Stryker's, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754)—A dark but friendly and attractive little upper West Side outpost where one can hear live jazz (and recorded soul, rhythm and blues, and similar Motown fare on its jukebox). Mondays and Tuesdays have been turned over to cool and placid Chet Baker and his young, enthusiastic musical coterie. Wednesday and Thursday, April 16-17, Don Elliott brings in his mellophone to play with a quartet. Guitarist Eddie Hazell's trio performs Friday and Saturday, April 18-19. Sundays are claimed by the silken guitar duo of Chuck Wayne and Joe Puma. Music Mondays through Thursdays from nine-thirty to two; Fridays and Saturdays from nine-thirty until three; Sundays from nine until two. Snacks.

Studio 77/Ali's Alley, 77 Greene St., between Spring and Broome Sts. (226-9042)—A simple, unpretentious, but enormous music room converted from a ground-floor SoHo loft. The space, adorned with very large, colorful posters and other wall hangings, is devoted to the weighty and intense music of Rashied Ali and his quartet—bassist Benny Wilson, saxophonist James Vass, and pianist David Durrah. Ali was John Coltrane's drummer during the final, most exploratory period of that innovator's career, and Ali has since used Coltrane's Ultima Thule as a base camp for further reconnoiterings. Music for the adventurous Thursdays through Sundays from ten to three. Soft drinks.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Those who might mistake this exurban-looking establishment for a natural-foods vegetarian-hash house and, as a result, be put off will be pleased to learn that it is not only an exemplary restaurant and bar but a first-rate listening room. Steve Elmer and Vinnie Burke offer up piano-bass duets from ten to two Wednesday and Thursday, April 16-17. On Sundays from nine to one, Nina Sheldon delivers some compelling and colorful jazz sambas and variations on bop standards. She is assisted by bassist Mike Moore.

Tin Palace, 325 Bowery, at 2nd St. (674-0566)—This establishment, despite its Bowery address, is not a Bowery bar. The clientele is, for the most part, an artsy crowd—an especially congested one after ten-thirty, when the music begins—of loft dwellers and musicians, and some listeners who don't live in lofts. Fridays and Saturdays, flutist Lloyd McNeill and his exciting band—the very fine Cecil McBee on bass, electric pianist Dom Salvador, and drummer Buddy Williams—keep everyone satisfied with their infectiously rhythmic, Brazilian-flavored material. Several Russian jazz players known professionally as the Russians Are Coming convene on Sundays and Tuesdays; and on Wednesdays and Thursdays trumpeter Greg Bobulinski attempts some Clifford Brown-inspired, acrobatic solos with his quartet. Joe Carroll, who recorded "Oo-Sho-Be-Do-Be," "Jump-Did-Le-Ba," and other bop vocal classics with Dizzy Gillespie some twenty-five years ago, takes off with the group. Dinner.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011)—Charles Mingus, lately more of an inspirational than a dynamic force, leads his quintet through Sunday, April 20. On Tuesday, April 22, Billy Harper, a young and very exciting tenor saxophonist who steams up the reed section of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band, begins a stint leading his own sextet. On Mondays, the Jones-Lewis aggregation—sixteen or so of New York's finest studio men—assemble themselves and their instruments on the acutely angled bandstand. The band frequently lights into some rousing, hard-hitting material, but it also devotes its energies to a number of ballads that are, as a rule, less successful, often giving way to studied (and sometimes unstudied) looseness, musical punch lines, and clowning. Juanita Fleming has taken on the exacting task of replacing the band's dazzling vocalist, Dee Dee Bridgewater. Music from ten.

West Boondock, 114 Tenth Ave., at 17th St. (924-9723)—A hanging tetrahedron made of plastic straws and pipe cleaners, stained-glass windows, and nicely constructed jazz by piano-bass duos help this restaurant sustain the interest its kitchen formerly aroused. Jill McManus is at the keyboard, aided by bassist Wayne Dockery Thursdays through Sundays. Pianist Steve Elmer comes in for a Monday-through-Wednesday run on April 21. Music from eight to two. Dinner.

West End Café, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—It's no wonder that this wood- and brick-walled beer-and-hamburger haunt serves as an extracurricular, off-campus student union—Columbia University is, after all, just across the street. What is noteworthy about the student population here is its undeniable but by no means square appreciation of thirties and forties jazz. Visiting musical professors have their say on the subject every night of the week: On Mondays and Tuesdays, Eddie Durham, a trombonist and one of the very first jazz guitarists (he took up the instruments in the twenties), pianist Ram Ramirez, trumpeter Franc Williams, and drummer Shelton Gary perform. Wednesdays and Thursdays, Tiny Grimes, a bluesy, bebopping four-string guitarist who played with Art Tatum and recorded with Charlie Parker in the forties, frolics with a trio. A bop quintet takes the stand on Fridays and Saturdays, and on Sundays, Mabel Godwin performs with a quartet. The music starts at nine. All this and student food at student prices.

BIG DEALS

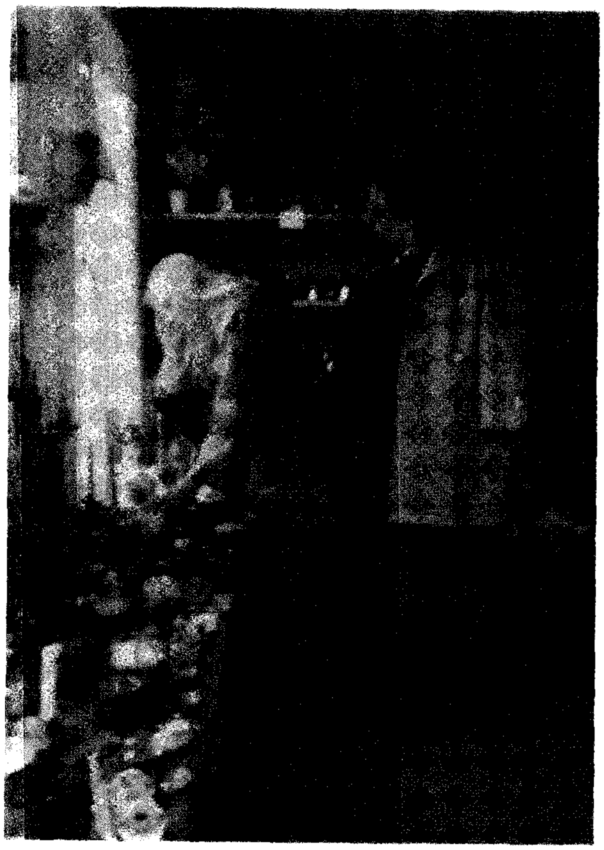
(Dinner and supper, music, and all that.)

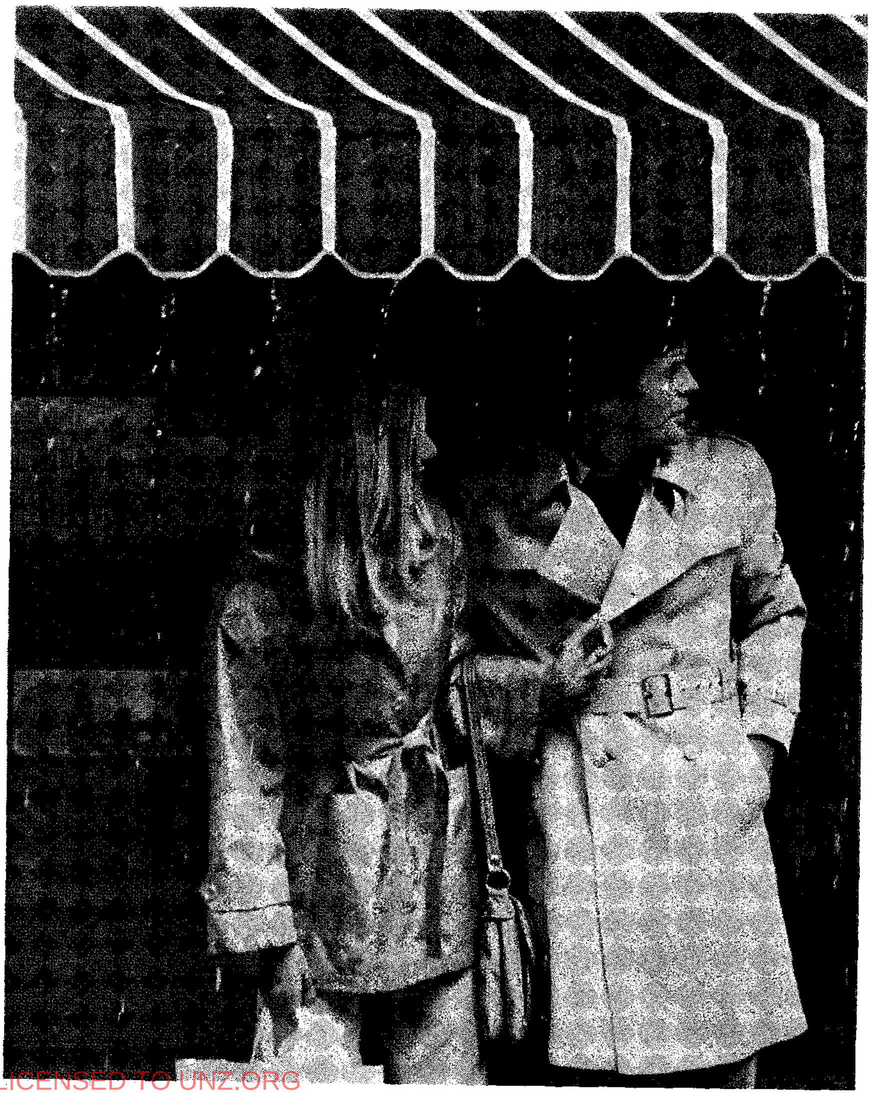
Plaza, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. (PL 9-3000)—Soprano Eileen Fulton will be singing in the **PERSIAN ROOM** through Saturday, April 19. The song-and-dance team of Robert Kole and Ernest Parham arrives on Monday, April 21. Shows Mondays through Thursdays at ten, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. The trios of Barry Levitt and René Martel put forth dance tunes from seven to one. Closed Sundays. . . . ¶ Violinist George Cardini and pianist Jules Feuerstein are playing in the **PLAZA RESTAURANT**, from seven-thirty to ten-thirty, Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Mondays through Fridays, violinist Ernest Schoen and pianist Jules Kuti are on hand in the **PALM COURT**, from five to one. Sandu Marcu does the fiddling Saturdays from five to one, and Sundays from four to midnight.

Rainbow Grill, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-

He: I must be crazy—running around like this. All on account of her. She doesn't care if it rains or not. But that keeps it interesting. You just never know. So we get a little wet, so what?

I mean— who can refuse a face like that?





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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

8970)—The sumptuous mountain fastness is presenting singer Lainie Kazan at dinner and supper. Dance music commences at seven-forty-five. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-9090)—Sy Oliver's band plays for dancing on this sterling rooftop, from seven, every night but Sunday.

St. Regis-Sheraton, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. (PL 3-4500)—French singer-composer-pianist Michel Legrand appears at dinner and supper in the **Maisonette**. He is assisted by fellow-musicians Grady Tate, Phil Woods, Joe Beck, Bob Brookmeyer, Randy Brecker, and Ron Carter, and vocalist Laury Shelly. The dance music issues from the Charles Turecamo orchestra. Closed Sundays. . . . ¶ In the **King Cole Grille**, harpist Eleanor Fell plays from seven-thirty to eleven, every night but Sunday.

Waldorf-Astoria, Park Ave. at 49th St. (EL 5-3000)—These nights, at dinner and supper, the **Empire Room** affords the songs of Tony Martin and the dances of Cyd Charisse. Dancing to the Empire Room Orchestra. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Robert Bidner—Realist paintings with an atmosphere of silent menace in which cars usually figure and from which people are absent. "Colorado Emergency" shows two white ambulances parked back to back on a road in a mesa-rimmed Southwestern landscape; in "Marlboro Country," a snappy blue sports car is parked under a Marlboro cigarette advertisement posted on a grimy, graffiti-filled wall in a desolate lot; "20 Phantom II" is a head-on portrait of that car and its looming, aggressive grille, seen against a black brick wall; "Six-Eight-Ten Great Jones Street"—a rare carless work—is an imposing study of a section of the façade of a sandstone loft building whose handsome arches and columns and look of rich decay are more redolent of Venice than of lower Manhattan. Other paintings show cars parked along river fronts, on country roads, in closed parking lots, and in other lonely places where cars unaccountably and invariably appear. Bidner's painting style is reminiscent of Magritte's, but his vision is rooted in photographic rather than surrealistic conventions. Through Saturday, April 19. (FAR Gallery, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St. Open Mondays.)

Pat Steir—The leitmotif of this exhibition of oils and drawings is a leafless, stemless rose with an X through it, which appears and reappears on huge canvases and in smaller pencil drawings, together with the artist's characteristic scribbles, scrawls, sketchy notations, and chart symbols. The paintings, like the drawings, look like preparations for mysterious and important projects; their atmosphere of haste and tentativeness is coupled with an almost arrogant decisiveness of conception. Cy Twombly and Jim Dine have evidently influenced but by no means intimidated this thirty-seven-year-old artist. Through Saturday, April 19. (Fourcade-Droll, 36 E. 75th St.)

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Abe Ajay—Works in relief, combining painted canvas panels and poured polyester resin. Through Saturday, April 19. (Gimpel, 1040 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Peter Arno (1904-68)—Cartoons, magazine-cover designs, and book-jacket illustrations spanning a forty-year period. Through May 3. (Nicholls, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 5.)

Charles Arnoldi—Wall pieces shaped out of sanded, oiled, or painted tree branches; first one-man show in New York. Through April 30. (Elkon, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Margit Beck—Abstract landscapes done from an aerial perspective. Through Wednesday, April 23. (Babcock, 805 Madison Ave., at 68th St.)

Joseph Beuys—An environment composed of copper and iron rods arranged against a wall, an antique wooden sled, and two blackboards on which there are drawings. Through May 17. (Feldman, 33 E. 74th St. Open Mondays.)

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Hyman Bloom—Abstracts and landscapes by a Boston artist. Through Saturday, April 26. (Dintenfass, 18 E. 67th St.)

Erich Brauer—Paintings and etchings by a member of the Vienna school of Fantastic Realism. Through May 10. (Aberbach, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Bernard Chaet—Paintings of interiors with figures. Through Friday, April 18. (Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Philippe Chomienne—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, April 26. (Gruenebaum, 25 E. 77th St.)

Chuck Close—Photographic paintings of people's heads. Through April 30. (Bykert, 24 E. 81st St.)

Rosemary Cove—Sculptures of the female figure, most of them small terra-cottas and bronzes but one of them a larger-than-life papier-mâché figure. Through Saturday, April 26. (Ingber, 3 E. 78th St.)

Peter Dechar—Large paintings of outsize pears. Through Saturday, April 26. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Victor de Grailly (1804-89)—Paintings of American landscapes by a French painter who never visited here but based his work on other artists' engravings. Some of the engravings are also included. Through Saturday, April 26. (Washburn, 820 Madison Ave., at 68th St.)

Sonia Delaunay—Eight large tapestries with geometric designs, along with some gouaches and graphics by an artist now ninety. Through May 3. (Zarre, 20 E. 69th St.)

Lynne Drexler—Thickly painted abstract landscapes. Through Saturday, April 26. (Alonzo, 26 E. 63rd St.)

Friedel Dzubas—Recent paintings. Through April 30. (Knoedler Contemporary Art, 19 E. 70th St.)

Red Grooms—Satirical gouaches, mainly centered on New York City sights like the shoppers at Bloomingdale's. Through Saturday, April 19. (Alexander, 26 E. 78th St.)

George Grosz (1893-1959)—A large selection of oils, watercolors, and ink drawings from the Berlin period, 1912-33. Through May 31. (Sabarsky, 987 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Budd Hopkins—Hard-edge geometric paintings arranged in panels. Through April 30. (Zierler, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Wolf Kahn—Landscapes of New England in autumn, mostly. Through May 1. (Borgenicht, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Ellsworth Kelly—A new series of paintings, all in shades of gray. Through May 3. (Castelli, 4 E. 77th St.)

Robert Keyser—Abstract paintings and drawings. Through May 16. (Rosenberg, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Bernard Lamotte—Paintings of the French countryside. Through Saturday, April 19. (Larcada, 23 E. 67th St.)

Barbara Lekberg—Figurative bronze sculptures, welded and cast. Through April 30. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Frances Manacher / Susan Hauer—Paintings. / Collages and small box constructions. Through Saturday, April 26. (Bodley, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Robert Mann—Intricately painted scenes of rural life in Canada in the twenties; first one-man show in New York. Through Saturday, April 19. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

John R. Manning—Paintings and drawings, mostly of farm buildings, emphasizing shadows and substantial shapes. Through Saturday, April 26. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Elsie Manville—Still-lifes and interiors. Through Saturday, April 26. (Kraushaar, 1055 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Picasso (1881-1973)—A benefit loan show of more than fifty paintings, with selections from his entire career. Through May 17. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Tuesdays, 10 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Wallace Putnam—Semi-abstract oil paintings, many with birds or animals. Through Saturday, April 19. (Lerner-Heller, 789 Madison Ave., at 67th St.)

Harvey Quaytman—Five acrylic paintings on shaped canvases. Through May 10. (McKee, 140 E. 63rd St.)

Robert Reid—Abstract watercolors derived from beach scenes. Through May 17. (Rankow, 108 E. 78th St.)

Paul Resika—Small landscapes in oil. Through May 3. (Carlton, 127 E. 69th St.)

Judith Rothschild—Relief paintings incorporating paper cutouts. Through Saturday, April 19. (Ault, 25 E. 77th St.)

John Safer—Free-form sculptures in bronze, brass, and acrylic. Through Saturday, April 26. (Findlay, 984 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Reeve Schley III—Watercolors of New Mexico and New Jersey, plus a few portraits. Through Saturday, April 26. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Antonio Segui—Dogs in landscapes and portraits of dogs. Through Saturday, April 19. (Lefebre, 47 E. 77th St.)

Steven Sloman—Black-and-white abstract paintings. Through Saturday, April 19. (Poindexter, 24 E. 84th St.)

Julian Stanczak—Paintings in which color or shades of gray are organized in relation to a grid overlay. Through Saturday, April 26. (Jackson, 32 E. 69th St.)

Janet Stayton—Watercolors, soft canvases mounted in boxes, and a group entitled "Worksheets" that combines various mediums on paper. Through May 17. (Deitcher, 20 E. 67th St.)

John Storrs (1885-1956)—Sculptures and paintings by a Chicago-born artist who studied with Rodin and later worked in Cubist-derived styles. Through Saturday, April 26. (Schoelkopf, 825 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Edvins Strautmanis / Lawrence Williams—Abstract Expressionist paintings. / Polyester-resin sculptures of feet. Through April 30. (Stone, 48 E. 86th St.)

Anthony Toney—Semi-abstract paintings—landscapes and cityscapes predominating. Through Saturday, April 26. (ACA, 25 E. 73rd St.)

Charmion von Wiegand—Collages. Through May 3. (Goldowsky, 1078 Madison Ave., at 81st St.)

Ellen Wolff—Assemblages made of stainless steel combined with oil on canvas. Through Saturday, April 19. (Gallery 84, 1046 Madison Ave., at 80th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 5.)

American Watercolor Society—The hundred-and-eighth annual of watercolors, gouaches, and pastels by artists from all parts of the United States, as well as a group of watercolors by contemporary Australian painters. Through Sunday, April 20. (National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. Daily, 1 to 5.)

Group Shows—At the **Perls**, 1016 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Thirty works, among them a Calder mobile, a Picasso tapestry, and an oil by Léger. Through May 17. . . . **Weintraub**, 992 Madison Ave., at 77th St.: Paintings and sculptures by Picasso, Marini, and others. Through May 15. . . . **Weyhe**, 794 Lexington Ave., at 61st St.: Drawings and watercolors by, among others, Miklos Suba, Gaston Lachaise, and William Zorach. Through May 3. . . . **Wildenstein**, 19 E. 64th St.: A loan exhibition (entrance fee: $2) of still-lifes from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, beginning with paintings of flowers, fruits, meat, fish, and utensils by Dutch masters, and including work by Chardin, Courbet, Manet, Monet, Gauguin, Renoir, van Gogh, Cézanne, Picasso, Matisse, O'Keeffe, and Magritte. Through May 3. (Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Richard Anuszkiewicz—Paintings by an Optical artist. Through Saturday, April 19. (Crispo, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jack Beal—Three new large paintings, all with figures, and related charcoal drawings. Through May 9. (Frumkin, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; open Saturdays at noon; closed Sundays.)

Max Beckmann (1884-1950)—A small retrospective of paintings. Through May 3. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.)... ¶ Twenty-three drawings, dated 1909-50, and three bronze sculptures. Through May 10. (Carus, 1044 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Isabel Bishop—Drawings and etchings, as well as a few new paintings, in a show running concurrently with her retrospective at the Whitney Museum. Through May 24. (Midtown, 11 E. 57th St.)

Susan Crile / Donald Evans—Aerial views by an artist who is chiefly a colorist. / Stamps for imaginary countries. Through Wednesday, April 23. (Fischbach, 29 W. 57th St.)

José de Creeft—Recent sculptures. Through Saturday, April 26. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Richard Francisco—Small wall constructions in mixed mediums. Through Saturday, April 19. (Parsons, 24 W. 57th St.)

Howard Kanovitz—Photo-Realist paintings of interiors and street scenes. Through Saturday, April 26. (Stefanotty, 50 W. 57th St.)

Raymond Mintz—Works painted in County Kerry, Ireland, primarily. Through Saturday, April 19. (Rehn, 655 Madison Ave., at 60th St.)

Joan Miró—Paintings and sculptures executed between 1969 and 1974. Through May 2. (Matisse, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Ed Moses / Anne Truitt—Abstract paintings. Through Wednesday, April 23. / New sculptures and drawings. Through May 15. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

David Parrish—Photo-Realist paintings of motorbikes. Through Saturday, April 26. (Janis, 6 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Michael Robbins—Drawings celebrating such activities as motorcycling, surfing, and skydiving; first one-man show in New York. Through Saturday, April 19. (Parsons-Truman, 24 W. 57th St.)

Richard Stankiewicz—Recent welded-steel sculptures composed of rods and cylinders. Through Saturday, April 19. (Zabriskie, 29 W. 57th St.)... ¶ Another recent piece, plus three earlier works. Through May 2. (Hammarskjöld Plaza Sculpture Garden, Second Ave. at 47th St.)

Ernest Trova—Five large sculptures, plus models for outdoor pieces. Through May 3. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

P. Wilson—Abstract paintings on canvas and paper. Through Saturday, April 26. (Esman, 29 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the RENÉ, 6 W. 57th St.: An exhibition that is a re-creation of one held by this gallery owner twenty years ago in Paris. Among the eight painters and sculptors are Vasarely, Agam, Soto, and Duchamp. Through May 3.... SACHS, 29 W. 57th St.: Paintings, sculptures, and constructions by, among others, Power Boothe, Jackie Ferrara, and John Willenbecher. Through May 1.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Arman—On view is a two-room apartment, complete with furniture and decorations, that was both conceived and ravaged by the artist. Also, films and photographs of the destruction taking place. Through Saturday, April 19. (Gibson, 392 West Broadway.)

David Diao—Abstract paintings. Through May 15. (Cuningham Ward, 94 Prince St.)

Porfirio Di Donna—Abstract drawings. Through Saturday, April 19. (Benedek, 145 Spring St.)

Dan Flavin—Fluorescent-tube sculptures. (Castelli and Weber galleries, both at 420 West Broadway. The Castelli show closes Saturday, April 26, and the Weber show Wednesday, April 30.)

Robert Grosvenor—Sculptures made from wooden poles, and the preliminary drawings for them. Through April 30. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Susan Hall—Figurative paintings. Through May 2. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Patrick Ireland—Sculptures of painted rope. Through May 1. (112 Greene Street.)

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Jim Juthstrom—One large painting that covers an entire wall, plus smaller paintings and drawings. Through Thursday, April 24. (Landmark, 469 Broome St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11:30 to 5:30.)

Frank Litto—Carved wall pieces; first one-man show in New York. Through April 30. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

Dorothy McGahee—Acrylic paintings, many of couples or groups in outdoor settings; first solo show in New York. (Second Story Spring Street Society, 167 Spring St.)

Liliana Porter—Works that combine several elements—for instance, a silk-screened green pepper perched on a table that has been drawn on the wall. Through Saturday, April 19. (Hundred Acres, 456 West Broadway.)

Gabriele Roos—Bands of color on acrylic canvases. Through Thursday, April 24. (Westbroadway, 431 West Broadway.)

Jane Schneider—Enamelled-steel sculptures in many colors and many sizes; first solo show in New York. Through May 7. (14 Sculptors, 75 Thompson St.)

Eileen Spikol / Shirley Gorelick—Wall and floor pieces, among them plaster masks mounted on wood panels. / Large figurative paintings and etchings. Through May 7. (SoHo 20, 99 Spring St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Michelle Stuart—Rocks, earth, and graphite applied to mounted paper. Through April 29. (Hutchinson, 127 Greene St.)

William Tillyer—Abstract paintings of still-lifes; first one-man show in New York. Through Saturday, April 19. (Ariadne, 410 West Broadway.)

Richard Vaux / Garey Riester—Paintings in acrylic on layers of vinyl. / Large-scale Photo-Realist paintings of people of primitive cultures. Through Friday, April 18. (Yu, 393 West Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the AAMES, 93 Prince St.: Paintings by John Grillo, Vincent Malta, and James Norman. Through Saturday, April 19. ... CALDWELL, 383 West Broadway: Ronald Bladen showing sculptures, Stuart Shedletsky showing paintings, plus two other artists. Through April 30.... 55 MERCER STREET: Paintings by Roger Laux Nelson, and sculptures by Frank Lincoln Viner and Jean Linder. Through Wednesday, April 23.... O.K. HARRIS, 383 West Broadway: Paintings by John Kacere, Tony King, and Martin Hoffman, as well as graphs on paper by Karen Shaw. Through Saturday, April 19.

OTHER GALLERIES

March Avery—Paintings of animals, landscapes, and seascapes. Through April 27. (Waverly, 103 Waverly Pl. Daily, except Wednesdays, noon to 5.)

Brower Hatcher—Colored-wire and steel sculptures. Through Friday, April 25. (City University Graduate Center, ground-floor arcade, 33 W. 42nd St. Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 6; Saturdays, 11 to 3.)

Richard Hunt / Henry Moore—Bronze and welded-steel sculptures, all under twenty inches high. / Ten bronzes and three drawings. Through Saturday, April 26. (Dorsky, 111 Fourth Ave., at 11th St. Open Mondays.)

Group Show—Works in mixed mediums by ten artists. Through May 15. (Walker Street Gallery, 46 Walker St., two blocks south of Canal St., at Broadway. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Margaret Bourke-White (1904-71)—Prints from the twenties and thirties, found in a trunk by the purchasers of the late photographer's house, where they had been carelessly overlooked by Syracuse University, the inheritor of Bourke-White's prints and negatives. (Syracuse sued and only partially retrieved the cache—thus this show). On view are studies of industrial products and machines, portraits of sharecroppers, views of the Terminal Tower in Cleveland, and pictures taken in Russia in 1930 and 1932. Particularly outstanding are the abstract photographs, taken in factories, of plow blades, R.C.A. speakers, frames of grand pianos, and other industrial objects, which bring to mind (and rank with) the abstractions of Weston, Strand, and Ray. But there is also something off-putting about these pictures, probably having to do with the glorification of business that they promoted in *Fortune*, where they first appeared. Through April 30. (Schoelkopf, 825 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Benno Friedman—The works here are photographs only in the sense that a blurry black-and-white photographic image is the starting point for each; over this background the artist superimposes washes and splashes of color (largely mauves, browns, pinks, and blues), with results that often recall paintings by Avery, Dine, de Kooning, and Marin. A series of twenty-two pictures called "True Love" presents various parts of the body and various erotic activities, in modes ranging from very abstract to pretty dirty. "Two Friends in Love, and Their Dogs, Who Are No Longer Together" is a brilliantly painted four-part series based on photographs of a couple in a field, and of their dogs. There are a number of unearthly landscapes based on photographs of ordinary places. Throughout, Friedman (whose photographs have appeared in *Playboy*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Seventeen*, as well as at the Museum of Modern Art) displays a fluency of brushwork and an authority of design rare among abstract painters, and scarcely to be expected from a commercial photographer. Through Saturday, April 26. (Light, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

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Lucien Clergue—Abstractions (one group printed on aluminum plates), some of the sea, sand, and plants. Through Friday, April 18. (French Institute / Alliance Française Gallery, 22 E. 60th St. Mondays through Fridays, noon to 7.)

Larry Fink / John Messina—Party pictures. / Photographs taken at the East Louisiana State Hospital. Through April 29. (Midtown Y Gallery, 344 E. 14th St. Sundays through Thursdays, noon to 8; Fridays, noon to 4.)

Josef Koudelka—Photographs of Gypsies and country people taken during the last decade by a thirty-seven-year-old Czech photographer who left his country in 1968. Through May 11. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. Weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9; Sundays, noon to 6.)

W. Eugene Smith and Aileen M. Smith—Prints from their photographic essay "Minamata," detailing the effects of pollution on a Japanese fishing village. Through June 29. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open Sundays.)

George A. Tice—People, cityscapes, and landscapes, as well as plants, trees, and ice forms, in a selection that represents work from 1953 to 1973. Through May 17. (Witkin, 243 E. 60th St. Open Thursday evenings until 8.)

Minor White—Photographs done from 1943 to the present. Through Saturday, April 26. (Light, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Group Shows—At the NEIKRUG, 224 E. 68th St.: Imogen Cunningham, Julia Margaret Cameron, Berenice Abbott, Dorothea Lange, Margaret Bourke-White, Inge Morath, Jill Krementz, and Sarah Moon are among the women photographers represented here. Through Friday, April 18. (Thursdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)... SOHO PHOTO, 30 W. 13th St.: Photographs by Minor White, Paul Strand, and others. Through April 29. (Fridays through Sundays, 1 to 6; Tuesdays, 7:30 P.M. to 9 P.M.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"How Grim Was My City" is an exhibition of photographs, documents, and objects intended to show that late-nineteenth-century New York was not the charming place that art and nostalgia have created but was a city of "grinding poverty, decimating disease, intolerable housing, filth, congestion, and crime." Photographs (some by the great documentary photographer Jacob Riis) of conditions in tenements, hospitals, schools, and workplaces, as well as of the dirty and crowded streets, effectively illustrate the exhibition's title. Unfortunately, the show doesn't leave it at that. It also presents color photographs taken last year at some of the sites photographed in the nineteenth century, to suggest that things have changed for the better. For example, a picture of the housing-project playground at 96th Street and First Avenue is contrasted with a picture of the identical site in 1896, showing a landfill-and-pier construction project and toiling, underpaid workers. There are two problems with this presentation: (1) the color photographs are outrageously gorgeous (the project playground, for example, looks so attractive and pleasant and clean that the viewer might wonder why there are no children playing in it—unless he happens to have actually seen the playground and knows what a bleak and forbidding and dirty place it and the project are); and (2) even if the contemporary pictures were true to actuality, they still wouldn't prove anything. One of the facts of life in this city (and others) is that when poverty and misery are eradicated from one place they merely shift to another. Contemporary pictures as horrifying as those taken by Riis could (and should) be taken today. The golden city portrayed by the museum's color photographer belongs to the world of advertising and not to reality. Through Sept. 1. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

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Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Great Wave" is the name of a remarkable exhibition here of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japanese woodcuts hung side by side with prints by the Impressionists on whom they exerted an influence. Through May 11. . . . ¶ Twenty-four bronze representations of Buddhist and Hindu deities, from India, Pakistan, and Northeast Asia, dating from the fourth century to the thirteenth. Through May 31. . . . ¶ "Romantic and Glamorous Hollywood Design," a show of costumes worn by such film stars as Mary Pickford, Katharine Hepburn, and Barbra Streisand. Through Aug. 31. . . . ¶ Paintings, including eight large triptychs, by the contemporary British artist Francis Bacon. Through June 29. . . . ¶ A selection of paintings (by, among others, William Powell Frith and Edwin Henry Landseer) that were exhibited at the Royal Academy in London during the reign of Queen Victoria. Through April 29. (Tuesdays, 10 to 8:45; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Furniture by Michael Thonet, Hector Guimard, Gerrit Rietveld, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Through April 30. . . . ¶ Drawings, all done between 1920 and 1929, by Moholy-Nagy, Sheeler, Léger, and others. Through June 15. . . . ¶ An exhibit of prints in which works on similar themes by artists of different generations are juxtaposed. Among those represented are Munch, Sloan, and Hockney. Through June 8. (Weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A Max Ernst retrospective of about three hundred paintings, collages, frottages, sculptures, and illustrated books, loaned from public and private collections in the United States and Europe. Through Sunday, April 20. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings dating from 1964 to the present by Brice Marden. Through April 27. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesday evenings, 6 to 9, with no admission charge; Sundays, noon to 6. . . . ¶ Music at the Museum: On Tuesday, April 22, at 7:30, the première of a work by Carman Moore, plus music by Rachmaninoff and others, performed by Ruth Laredo, piano; Samuel Baron, flute; and Robert Sylvester, cello. For information about tickets, call 860-1356.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—A retrospective of the work of the realist painter Isabel Bishop. Through June 1. A complementary show is at the Midtown Galleries, 11 E. 57th St. . . . ¶ Paintings, drawings, and constructions by Roy De Forest. Through May 4. . . . ¶ Small, stuffed figures, personal artifacts, photographs, and collages arranged in boxes, glass cases, and window frames by a Los Angeles artist, Betye Saar, whose themes are contemporary religious, social, and political issues. Through Sunday, April 20. (Weekdays, 11 to 6; Tuesday evenings, 6 to 10, with no admission charge; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Nineteenth- and twentieth-century American paintings by, among others, Thomas Cole, Arthur B. Davies, and Albert Pinkham Ryder. Through June 29. . . . ¶ A small exhibit of contemporary Japanese ceramics (jars, bowls, plates, and bottles) on loan from a private collection. Through April 27. (Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Shadow figures from China, India, Malaysia, and Thailand, some arranged in groups behind a screen as they might appear in an actual performance. Also, three-dimensional Asian puppets. Through Sunday, April 20. . . . ¶ A model of a huge prehistoric flying reptile, a pterosaur, with a wingspan of fifty-one feet. Through May 4. (Weekdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

China House, 125 E. 65th St.—A loan show of jades, dating from 2000 B.C. through the Han Dynasty (220 A.D.). Through June 15. (Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 2 to 5.)

The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park—"The Secular Spirit" is the title of a loan exhibit of about three hundred objects made for everyday use between 1300 and 1550, ranging from household utensils to works of art. Through June 3. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 1 to 4:45.)

Japan House, 333 E. 47th St.—An exhibition of traditional containers and wrappings for foods, drinks, spices, and gifts, made of wood, bamboo, straw, hemp, ceramic, paper, and fabric. . . . ¶ Twenty-eight Ukiyo-e woodcuts from a private collection. Both through Sunday, April 20. (Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—More than thirty tapestries made from the designs of various contemporary artists. Through April 27. (Mondays through Thursdays, noon to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—A large exhibition of letters, musical scores, posters, photographs, and other memorabilia of the composer Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900). . . . ¶ Highlights from the museum's collection of illuminated manuscripts, early printed books, and autograph manuscripts (for example, a Thoreau notebook). Both through Sunday, April 20. (Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 49 W. 53rd St.—New York wood sculptures (decoys, cigar-store figures, boat models, for example), the earliest piece dated 1676 and the latest 1964. Through June 1. (Daily, except Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

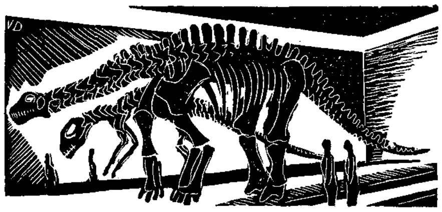
New York Cultural Center, 2 Columbus Circle—A retrospective exhibition of paintings by Leon Golub. Through May 4. . . . ¶ Abstract Expressionist paintings by Sabina Teichman. Through Sunday, April 20. . . . ¶ A show of American prints done during the last two years by James Rosenquist, Yvonne Jacquette, Joe Goode, and others. Through May 4. (Wednesdays through Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 799-4420, for Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center TR 4-2424, for Carnegie Hall CI 7-7459, and for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Final performances of the season—Wednesday evening, April 16: "Falstaff," with Evelyn Lear, Benita Valente, Fedora Barbieri, Joann Grillo, Cornell MacNeil, Douglas Ahlstedt, and Thomas Stewart; conducted by James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, April 17: "La Bohème," with Katia Ricciarelli, Rita Shane, José Carreras, William Walker, Giorgio Tozzi, Russell Christopher, Andrij Dobriansky, and Charles Anthony; Leif Segerstam. . . . ¶ Friday evening, April 18: "Tosca," with Magda Olivero, James King, Ingvar Wixell, and Richard Best; Jan Behr. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, April 19: "The Siege of Corinth," with Beverly Sills, Shirley Verrett, Harry Theyard, Justino Díaz, and Richard T. Gill; Thomas Schippers. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, April 19: "La Bohème," with Katia Ricciarelli, Rita Shane, José Carreras, William Walker, Giorgio Tozzi, Russell Christopher, Andrij Dobriansky, and Charles Anthony; Leif Segerstam. A nonsubscription performance. (Evenings at 8. Matinées at 2.)



New York City Opera—Wednesday, April 16, at 8: "Die Fledermaus" (in English), with Johanna Meier, Arlene Randazzo, William McDonald, and Charles Roe; conducted by Alexis Hauser. . . . ¶ Thursday, April 17, at 8: "La Traviata," with Patricia Brooks, Sandra Walker, Tullio Pane, and Richard Fredricks; Judith Somogi. . . . ¶ Friday, April 18, at 8: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Marianna Ciraulo and Richard Kness, and "Pagliacci," with Patricia Craig and Elliott Palay; Luigi Martelli. . . . ¶ Saturday, April 19, at 2: "La Bohème," with Patricia Wells, Eleanor Bergquist, Tullio Pane, and Richard Fredricks; Luigi Martelli. . . . ¶ Saturday, April 19, at 8: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Patricia Wise, Kathleen Hegierski, Gaetano Scano, and Adib Fazah; Giuseppe Morelli. . . . ¶ Sunday, April 20, at 1: "Die Tote Stadt," with Carol Neblett, Diane Curry, John Alexander, and Dominic Cossa; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Sunday, April 20, at 7: "Carmen," with Joann Grillo, Glenys Fowles, Richard Kness, and John Darrenkamp; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Tuesday, April 22, at 8: "Salome," with Maralin Niska, Olivia Stapp, Alan Crofoot, and William Justus; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Wednesday, April 23, at 8: "Die Tote Stadt," with Carol Neblett, Diane Curry, John Alexander, and Charles Roe; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Thursday, April 24, at 8: "Faust," with Patricia Wells, Jeanne Piland, Richard Taylor, and Samuel Ramey; George Branson Gray. . . . ¶ Friday, April 25, at 8: "Madame Butterfly," with Maralin Niska, Diane Curry, Gaetano Scano, and Richard Fredricks; Giuseppe Morelli. . . . ¶ Saturday, April 26, at 2: "Die Tote Stadt," with Carol Neblett, Diane Curry, Richard Kness, and Charles Roe; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, April 26, at 8: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Patricia Wise, Sandra Walker, Richard Stilwell, and Tullio Pane; Giuseppe Morelli. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. TR 7-4727. Through Sunday, April 27.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, Leonard Bernstein conducting—A varied program on Thursday, April 17, at 8:30; Friday, April 18, at 2; and Saturday, April 19, at 8:30 (all with Mstislav Rostropovich, cello); and an all-Tchaikovsky program on Tuesday, April 22, at 7:30, and Thursday, April 24, at 8:30 (with Boris Belkin, violin).

Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra—Edo de Waart conducting, with Kyung-Wha Chung, violin. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, April 24, at 8.)

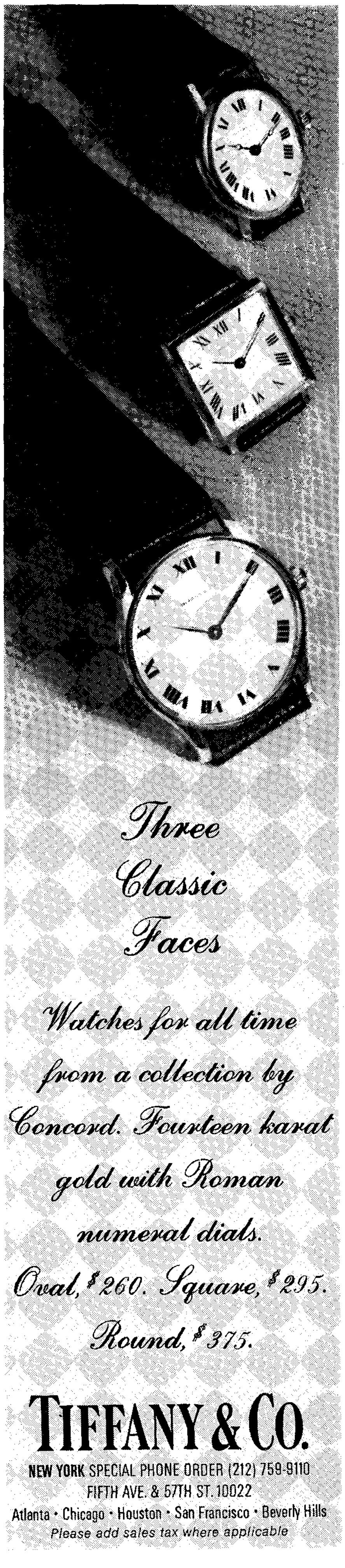
National Symphony Orchestra—Antal Dorati conducting the final concert of the season here, with Eugene Istomin, piano, and the N.S.O. String Quartet. (Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Sunday, April 20, at 3.)

Musica Aeterna Orchestra—Frederic Waldman conducting the final concerts of the season—Wednesday, April 16, at 8:30: With Leonard Raver, organ; Judith Blegen, soprano; Yvonne Minton, mezzo-soprano; Kenneth Riegel, tenor; John West, bass; and the Musica Aeterna Chorus. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . ¶ Saturday, April 26, at 8: With Clifford Curzon, piano. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. All seats have been sold, and only standing room is left.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Kazuyoshi Akiyama conducting the final concert of the season, with Jessye Norman, soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, April 20, at 3.)

Orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square, London—John Lubbock conducting. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Tuesday, April 22, at 8.)

Manhattan Orchestra—Anton Coppola conducting. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

of Music, 120 Claremont Ave., at 122nd St. Friday, April 25, at 8. Free tickets can be had by writing and enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope.)

Our Bach Concert—Henry Schuman conducting an orchestra and playing the oboe, with the New York Saxophone Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, April 26, at midnight.)

St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra—David Randolph directing, with Betty Lane, soprano; Ann Yervanian, mezzo-soprano; Grayson Hirst, tenor; John Ostendorf, bass; and John Challener, organ. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, April 19, at 8:30.)

Mannes Chorus—Richard Westenburg directing a performance of Orff's opera "Carmina Burana" in concert form. (Mannes College of Music, 157 E. 74th St. Wednesday, April 23, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Glee Club of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick—George Mead directing. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Friday, April 25, at 8:30.)

Sine Nomine Singers—Harry Saltzman directing a program of Elizabethan music, with the New York Consort of Viols. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, April 26, at 8.)

RECITALS

Music from Marlboro—Lucy Chapman, violin; Bruno Giuranna, viola; Paul Tobias, cello; and Paul Dunkel, flute, in a Mozart-Beethoven program. The final concert of the season. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Thursday, April 17, at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Chamber music. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Friday, April 18, at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—André Watts, piano; Jaime Laredo, violin; Leslie Parnas, cello; and others. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, April 18, at 8:30, and Sunday, April 20, at 5.)

Ian Shapinsky—Piano. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Saturday, April 19, at 5.)

New School Concerts—Alexander Schneider, violin, and Lee Luvisi, piano, in a sonata recital. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 741-5689. Sunday, April 20, at 5.)

Seymour Wakschal—Violin, with a chamber orchestra. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, April 20, at 8.)

Klara Barlow—Soprano. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Sunday, April 20, at 8:15.)

Chamber Music Society of the American Symphony Orchestra—With the Vieuxtemps String Quartet. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Sunday, April 20, at 8:30.)

Catherine and Joseph Malfitano—Soprano and violin, with Elena Malfitano, dancer. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, April 21, at 8.)

Bach Collegium of New York—The last in a series of all-Bach programs performed by Carlotta Wilsen, soprano; Yuval Waldman, violin; and others. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Monday, April 21, at 8.)

Light Fantastic Players—The final concert of the season, this one a program of quartets. (Horace Mann Auditorium, Teachers College, Broadway at 120th St. Monday, April 21, at 8. For tickets, call 865-6793.)

Régine Crespin—Soprano, in a program of French music. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, April 23, at 8.)

Emanuel Ax—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, April 23, at 8.)

Francesco Trio—Chamber music. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, April 24, at 8.)

Gina Bachauer—Piano. (Hunter College Assembly Hall, Park Ave. at 69th St. 535-5350. Saturday, April 26, at 8.)

Note—The Cleveland Quartet will give a recital at the Frick Collection (1 E. 70th St.) on Sunday, May 4, at 2:55. Free tickets, limited to one per applicant, will be issued starting Monday, April 21, in the order that written applications are received on that day (not before). More than one request may be sent in a single envelope. A self-addressed envelope should be enclosed.

MISCELLANY

Luciano Berio Retrospective Concert—A program of his music, performed by Jeannette Walters, soprano; Alice Shields, mezzo-soprano; Douglas Perry, tenor; Nora Post, oboe; Marilyn Dubow, violin; Cheryl Seltzer, piano; Joel Sachs, acting as pianist and conductor; and the Lenox Quartet. (McMillin Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. Wednesday, April 16, at 8. Tickets at the box office on the night of the concert.)

JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK/ETC.

Interludes—A varied series of hour-long performances at Town Hall (JU 2-4536)—Wednesday, April 16, at 5:45: **RONNY WHYTE AND TRAVIS HUDSON**. . . . ¶ Wednesday, April 23, at 5:45: **ANITA ELLIS AND ELLIS LARKINS.**

Bette Midler's Clams-on-the-Half-Shell Revue—With Lionel Hampton. (Minskoff Theatre, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Mondays through Thursdays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 7 and 10:30. Closes Saturday, May 10.)

John Prine—Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Friday, April 18, at 8.

Robin Trower—With Joe Vitale's Madmen. (Academy of Music, 126 E. 14th St. Friday, April 18, at 8 and 11:30. For information about tickets, call 757-9516.)

New York Jazz Repertory Company—A program entitled "Seventy-five Years of Jazz." (Carnegie Hall. Friday, April 18, at 8.)

John Coltrane Tribute—Andrew White conducting the Collective Black Artists Ensemble in a program of Coltrane music. (Town Hall. Saturday, April 19, at 8.)

National Jazz Ensemble—Chuck Israels conducting. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Saturday, April 19, at 8, with Bob James; and Saturday, April 26, at 8, with Phil Woods. For information about tickets, call 741-5620.)

Chico Hamilton Quintet—New York Jazz Museum, 125 W. 55th St. Sunday, April 20, at 3, 4, and 5. No tickets necessary.

Jazz Interactions—A tenth-anniversary benefit concert, with, among others, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Thelma Carpenter, Joe Newman, Howard McGhee, and Chico Hamilton. (Riverboat, Fifth Ave. at 34th St., in the Empire State Building. Sunday, April 20, from 3 P.M. until 4 A.M. Monday. For information about tickets, call 688-8257.)

Marshall Tucker Band—With McKendree Spring and Grinder Switch. (Marcellus Hartley Dodge Center, Broadway at 120th St. Sunday, April 20, at 7. For tickets, call 280-2417.)

José Feliciano—With Kenny Rankin. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, April 20, at 8:30.)

Freddie Hubbard and Novella Nelson—Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Sunday, April 20, at 8:30.

Highlights in Jazz—Al Hibbler, Sonny Greer, Russell Procope, Brooks Kerr, Bob Wilber, Kenny Davern, Bob Rosengarden, and others. (Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl. 598-3757. Monday, April 21, at 8.)

Hot Tuna—Academy of Music. Friday, April 25, at 8 and 11:30.

Charles Rouse and Company—Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday, April 25, at 8.

Taj Mahal—With Mose Allison. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, April 25, at 8.)

Lou Reed—With String Driven Thing. (Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Saturday, April 26, at 8.)

Les Paul, *Bucky Pizzarelli, George Benson,* and Laurindo Almeida—Carnegie Hall. Saturday, April 26, at 8.

Preservation Hall Jazz Band—Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. Saturday, April 26, at 8.

SPORTS

(The box-office number for Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts., is 564-4400, and for the Nassau Coliseum, Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, L.I., 516 794-9100.)

Baseball—At Shea Stadium—**METS:** Vs. Chicago, Saturday, April 19, at 2:15, and Sunday, April 20, at 1:05 (doubleheader). . . . ¶ St. Louis, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 22-23, at 2:05. . . . **YANKEES:** Vs. Boston, Wednesday, April 16, at 2. . . . ¶ Milwaukee, Friday, April 25, at 8, and Saturday, April 26, at 2.

PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL—American Basketball Association championship playoffs, Eastern Division: Nets vs. St. Louis. (Nassau Coliseum. Friday, April 18, at 8:05, if necessary.)

CREW—Childs Cup Regatta: Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Princeton. (Princeton. Sunday, April 19.)... ¶ Goes Trophy Regatta: Cornell, Navy, and Syracuse. (Syracuse. Saturday, April 26.)... ¶ Compton Cup Regatta: Harvard, M.I.T., and Princeton. (Boston. Saturday, April 26.)... ¶ Blackwell Cup Regatta: Pennsylvania, St. Joseph's, and Yale. (Derby, Conn. Saturday, April 26.)

HOCKEY—Stanley Cup East Division quarter-final playoffs: Islanders vs. Pittsburgh Penguins. (Nassau Coliseum. Thursday, April 17, at 8:05; Sunday afternoon, April 20, at a time to be announced; and, if necessary, Thursday, April 24, at 8:05.)

RACING—At **AQUEDUCT**: Weekdays at 1:30; through Saturday, May 31. The Bed o' Roses Handicap, Wednesday, April 16; the Wood Memorial, Saturday, April 19; and the Top Flight Handicap, Saturday, April 26.... **GARDEN STATE PARK**, Cherry Hill, N.J.: Weekdays at 2; through Tuesday, May 27.

TRACK—Boston Marathon, starting in Hopkinton, Mass. (Monday, April 21.)... ¶ Penn Relays. (Philadelphia. Friday and Saturday, April 25-26.)

TROTTING—At **ROOSEVELT RACEWAY**, Westbury: Weekdays at 8; through Saturday, May 17. ... **SARATOGA RACEWAY**, Saratoga Springs: Weekdays at 8:15, from Thursday, April 17, through Saturday, Nov. 15.

FOR CHILDREN

MUSIC—By the **LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN**: "The Mikado," Saturday and Sunday, April 19-20, at 4.... ¶ "H.M.S. Pinafore," Saturday, April 26, at 4. (Jan Hus Playhouse, 351 E. 74th St. 535-6310.)... **NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**: Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the final children's concerts of the season. (Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. TR 4-2424. Saturday, April 26, at 12:10 and 2:30.)

STAGE SHOWS—By the **AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN CHILDREN'S THEATRE**: "Pippi Longstocking: Her Life and Times." (McMillin Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. Saturday, April 26, at 3. No tickets necessary.)... **MERI MINI PLAYERS**: "Looice," Saturdays at 2:30.... ¶ "Alice Through the Looking Glass," Sundays at 2:30. (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. For tickets, call 697-0730.)... **ROD YOUNG'S PUPPET THEATRE**: "Cinderella." (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. LE 4-1672. Saturday, April 19, at 1:30. Children under three not admitted, and children under five must be accompanied by an adult.)

HAYDEN PLANETARIUM, Central Park W. at 81st St. (873-1300)—The current show is called "Between the Planets." (Mondays through Fridays at 2 and 3:30; Saturdays at 11, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5; and Sundays at 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Children under five not admitted.)

ET ALIA

(The New York Parks Department number to call for information about all free entertainment in the city is 472-1003.)

POETRY READINGS—Arthur Gregor and Robert Francis reading from their own works. (Art Gallery, Y.M.H.A., Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Monday, April 21, at 8.)

FLOWER SHOW—The April Flower Show will be presented by the Horticultural Society of New York (128 W. 58th St.) on Wednesday, April 23, from noon to 6.

FLEA MARKET—The New York Flea Market, at Sixth Ave. and 25th St., is open every Sunday, weather permitting, from noon to 7.

AUCTIONS—At the Sotheby Parke Bernet, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)—Thursday, April 17, at 2: American paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries; from a number of owners.... ¶ Friday and Saturday, April 18-19, at 2: French furniture, belonging to Joseph Alsop and others.... ¶ Wednesday and Thursday, April 23-24, at 2: Chinese ceramics and snuff bottles, from many collectors. Exhibition starts Friday, April 18.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EAST SIDE

Art, 36 E. 8th. (GR 3-7014)
Through April 17: "Janis."
April 18-20: "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Through April 19: "Penny Serenade" and "None but the Lonely Heart."
April 20: "Reducing," "Politics," and "Prosperity."
April 21: "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" and "The Ox-Bow Incident."
April 22: "Titanic" and "Cavalcade."
From April 23: "Shadow of a Doubt" and "Foreign Correspondent."

St. Marks Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 8th. (777-1955)
Through April 22: "Emmanuelle" and "California Split."
From April 23: "The Sting" and "American Graffiti."

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Murder on the Orient Express."

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (GR 5-1660)
Through April 20: "Harry & Tonto."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Emmanuelle."

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
"The Great Waldo Pepper."

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through April 22: "Lenny."
From April 23: "Ten Little Indians."

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (PL 9-1411)
"The Prisoner of Second Avenue."

Trans-Lux East, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (PL 9-2262)
"The Towering Inferno."

Fine Arts, 130 E. 58th. (755-6030)
"And Now My Love."

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (EL 5-3320)
"Rosebud."

Baronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"The Passenger."

Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"Shampoo."

R.K.O. 59th St. Twin I, 220 E. 59th. (688-1717)
"Amarcord."

R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2, 220 E. 59th. (688-0750)
"Chinatown" and "The Conversation."

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through April 23: "King of Hearts."
From April 24: "Touch and Go."

Cinema I, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-6022)
"Hearts and Minds."

Cinema II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-0774)
"Stavisky."

Byron (formerly called the First Avenue Screening Room), 1st Ave. at 61st. (753-5755)
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).

Columbia I, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
"A Woman Under the Influence."

Columbia II, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-2720)
Through April 20: "Emmanuelle."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Emmanuelle."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (RE 7-2622)
"The Yakuza."

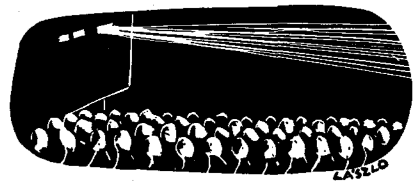
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (RE 4-0302)
"The Middle of the World."

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Funny Lady."

72nd Street East, 1st Ave. at 72nd. (BU 8-9304)
Through April 22: "The Front Page."
From April 23: "The Four Musketeers."

Juliet 2, 3rd Ave. at 83rd. (249-1806)
Through April 20: "Murder on the Orient Express."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: To be announced.

Trans-Lux 85th St., Madison at 85th. (BU 8-3180)
Through April 17: "Amarcord."
April 18-20: To be announced.
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: To be announced.



THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24		

THE FILMS PLAYING THE REGULAR MOVIE HOUSES ARE DESCRIBED IN BRIEF IN THE SECTION BELOW

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through April 20: "Lenny."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Ten Little Indians."

Loews Orpheum, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
"Funny Lady."

Loews Ciné, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (427-1332)
"Capone."

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
"The Great Waldo Pepper."

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin I, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
"Chinatown" and "The Conversation."

WEST SIDE

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (Separate admissions; call 674-2560 for particulars.)
April 16: "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" / "Le Jour Se Lève" / "Savage Messiah."
April 17: "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" / "Salvation" / "Savage Messiah."
April 18: "Some Like It Hot" / "Pearls in the Crown" / "Savage Messiah."
April 19: "Painters Painting" / "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" / "America" / "Some Like It Hot."
April 20: "Painters Painting" / "Children of Paradise" / "Isn't Life Wonderful" / "Some Like It Hot."
April 21: "The Clowns" / "High School" / "Memories of Underdevelopment."
April 22: "The Clowns" / "The Boys" / "Memories of Underdevelopment."
April 23: "The Clowns" / "Eva" / A program of erotic films by women.
April 24: "Eva" / "The Deluge, Part I" / "The Deluge, Part II."

Waverly, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
"Young Frankenstein."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (GR 7-7874)
"Amarcord."

Greenwich, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Through April 17: "Lenny."
April 18-20: "Report to the Commissioner."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Report to the Commissioner."

Quad Cinemas 1, 2, 3, and 4, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Through April 22 at one or another of the theatres: "Chinatown" and "The Conversation" / "The Long Goodbye" and "California Split" / "A Woman Under the Influence" / "Les Enfants Terribles."
From April 23: To be announced.

Elgin, 8th Ave. at 19th. (675-0935)
April 16: "Minnie and Moskowitz" and "Faces."
April 17-19: "Rebel Without a Cause" and "If . . ."
April 20: One performance, at noon, of "I Never Sang for My Father."
April 20-21: "Macbeth" and "Repulsion."
April 22: "Rosemary's Baby" and "Deep End."
April 23: "The Boys in the Band" and "Sunday Bloody Sunday."
From April 24: "The Grande Bouffe" and "Fellini Satyricon."

New Embassy, B'way at 46th. (PL 7-2408)
"Earthquake."

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (PL 7-2406)
Through April 17: "The Sting" and "American Graffiti."
April 18-20: "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore."

Music Hall, 6th Ave. at 50th. (757-3100)
Through April 23: "At Long Last Love."
From April 24: "Gone with the Wind."

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Tommy."

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (581-2323)
"Young Frankenstein."

Playboy, 110 W. 57th. (JU 6-4448)
Through April 20: "Emmanuelle" and "The Last Detail."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: "The Stepford Wives" and "Law and Disorder."

Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57th. (246-5123)
"A Brief Vacation."

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
April 16: "Charade" and "Two for the Road."
April 17: "Je T'Aime, Je T'Aime" and "Les Créatures."
April 18: "Sleuth" and "Games."
April 19: "Women in Love" and "The Rocking Horse Winner."
April 20: "Swan Lake" and "The Lovers of Teruel."
April 21: "Born Yesterday" and "It Should Happen to You."
April 22: "Pépé le Moko" and "Rififi."
April 23: "La Salamandre" and "Charles Dead or Alive."
April 24: "Husbands" and "Minnie and Moskowitz."

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Don't Cry with Your Mouth Full."

Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"The Godfather, Part II."

Cinema Studio, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
"Amarcord."

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Donkey Skin."

Embassy 72nd St., B'way at 72nd. (SC 4-6745)
"Murder on the Orient Express."

Loews 83rd St., B'way at 83rd. (877-3190)
Through April 20: To be announced.
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: To be announced.

New Yorker, B'way at 88th. (TR 4-9189)
Through April 20: "Murder She Said" and "Murder at the Gallop."
April 21-22: "The Maids" (American Film Theatre subscription series).
From April 23: To be announced.

Symphony, B'way at 95th. (AC 2-6600)
"Chinatown" and "The Conversation."

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)
Through April 17: "Lenny."
From April 18: "Report to the Commissioner."

Olympia, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Through April 21: "Harry & Tonto" and "Claudine."
April 22: Theatre closed.
From April 23: "The Stepford Wives" and "The Boys in the Band."

FILM LIBRARIES

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (956-7078)—April 16 at 5:30: "War Italian Style" (1966), directed by Luigi Scattini, with Buster Keaton and Martha Hyer. . . . ¶ April 17 at 5:30: "Forbidden Fruit" (1921), a silent film, directed by Cecil B. De Mille, with Agnes Ayres. . . . ¶ April 17 at 8 and April 18 at 2: "Witchcraft Through the Ages" (1922), a Swedish silent film, directed by Benjamin Christensen; no English inter-titles. . . . ¶ April 18 at 5:30 and April 19 at noon: A program of animated cartoons from the twenties by Disney, Sullivan, Lantz, and Fleischer. . . . ¶ April 19 at 3: "Forbidden Fruit.". . . ¶ April 19 at 5:30: "Such Is Life" (1929), a Czech-German silent film, directed by Carl Junghans; music track on print, made without inter-titles. . . . ¶ April 20 at 12:30 and 3: "World Without Sun" (1964), directed by Jacques Cousteau, a French film with an English narration. . . . ¶ April 20 at 5:30: "Bad Girl" (1931), directed by Frank Borzage, with James Dunn and Sally Eilers. . . . ¶ April 21 at 2: "Scotland Yard" (1930), directed by William K. Howard, with Edmund Lowe and Joan Bennett. . . . ¶ April 21 at 5:30: "Happy Days" (1929), directed by Benjamin Stoloff, with Claude E. Evans and Marjorie White. . . . ¶ April 22 at 2: "The Warrior's Husband" (1933), directed by Walter Lang, with Elissa Landi and Marjorie Rambeau. . . . ¶ April 22 at 5:30: "A Film About a Woman Who . . ." (1974), directed by Yvonne Rainer. . . . ¶ April 23 at 5:30: "The Warrior's Husband." . . . ¶ April 24 at 5:30: "Doctors' Wives" (1931), directed by Frank Borzage, with Warner Baxter and Joan Bennett. . . . ¶ April 24 at 8: "Bad Girl." (A limited number of tickets are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing or, if it is a Sunday, after noon. Tickets for the showings at 8 will not be accepted before 7:30.)

New York Cultural Center, 2 Columbus Circle. (LT 1-2311)—April 17: "Central Airport" (1933), directed by William A. Wellman, with Richard Barthelmess and Sally Eilers. . . . ¶ April 18: "The Dawn Patrol" (1930), directed by Howard Hawks, with Richard Barthelmess and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. . . . ¶ April 19-20: "Deadline—U. S. A." (1952), directed by Richard Brooks, with Humphrey Bogart and Kim Hunter. . . . ¶ April 24: "Disraeli" (1929), directed by Alfred E. Green, with George Arliss and Joan Bennett. (Showings Thursdays through Sundays at 3:30 and 5:30. A limited number of tickets are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the center after 1 on the day of the showing.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—Through April 22: "Methadone: An American Way of Dealing," directed by Julia Reichert and Jim Klein; and "Susan: April to June," directed by Linda Jassim. . . . ¶ Starting April 23: "Heaven and Earth Magic Feature" (1961), directed by Harry Smith. Showings at noon (except Wednesdays), 2, and 4 (plus 6 and 8 on Tuesday evenings). Call desk (794-0630) for ticket information.

Anthology Film Archives, 80 Wooster St. (226-0010)—Programs by Nelson, Keery, Mekas, Frampton, Acconci, Viola, Mangolte, Ozu, Murnau, Riefenstahl, Cortez, and others. Showings April 16 at 5, 7, and 9; April 17 at 6 and 7:30; April 18 at 6 and 10; April 19 at 2:30, 6, 9, and 11; April 20 at 8; and April 22-24 at 5, 7, and 9:30.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
THE DATE OF REVIEW IN THESE PAGES IS GIVEN FOR FILMS LESS THAN TWO YEARS OLD.

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore—Ellen Burstyn stars in this Martin Scorsese comedy, from an original script by Robert Getchell, about a thirty-five-year-old widow who sets out with her young son to make a new life. Full of funny malice and breakneck vitality, it's absorbing and intelligent even when the issues it raises get all fouled up. With Harvey Keitel, Kris Kristofferson, Valerie Curtin, Lelia Goldoni, Lane Bradbury, Diane Ladd, and, as the son, wire-drawn little Alfred Lutter, who has crack comedy timing. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/13/75.) (34th St. East. . . . ¶ Art, and Guild; April 18-20 and April 23-24.)

Amarcord—Directed by Fellini, a reversion to the great days of his "8½," but even more beautiful and detailed. The film is set in small-town Italy at the beginning of Fascism, as seen through the eyes of a boy (called Titta, played by Bruno Zanin), and it catches the sense of Italianate fun, the small-town self-importance that Fellini understands and loves. In Italian. (9/23/74) (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 1, 8th St. Playhouse, and Cinema Studio. . . . ¶ Trans-Lux 85th St.; through April 17.)

America (1924)—It would seem that D. W. Griffith didn't have the emotional involvement in the American Revolution that he had in the Civil War. This ambitious, elaborate epic is tame and stolid compared to "The Birth of a Nation." There are wonderful sequences, but it's a rather academic work—the sort of thing that always gets praised for its "authenticity." The cast includes Neil Hamilton and Carol Dempster (at less than par, even for her), and Lionel Barrymore as the villain. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 19.)

American Graffiti (1973)—The second feature film by the young George Lucas, about the teen-age world of 1962 in small-town northern California. We again inhabit the post-McCarthy, pre-Vietnam-protest land of drive-ins, old cars dangerously raced, Elvis haircuts, ritual necking. We live through a long night and dawn with the kids, but the next day comes up, and decisions have to be made about taking planes East to college and hiding homesickness. Flashy photography, perhaps more film knowledge than the film can use, but worth seeing. (8/13/73) (Guild; through April 17. . . . ¶ St. Marks Cinema; starting April 23.)

And Now My Love—A winsome love story that believes firmly in the predetermination of love and in the gifts of Lelouch. The film includes one of those cinéastes' *hommages*—an unusual one, to a movie by Lelouch himself ("A Man and a Woman"). The man in the current movie (André Dussollier) is a poor but honest jailbird who turns to porno filmmaking, then to commercial filmmaking, then to a future of Lelouch-like, snow-white feature filmmaking about life, love, and death; this takes him to America, travelling first-class. The girl (Marthe Keller), rich but also honest, and very, very bored, inherits a fortune from her father (Charles Denner). She becomes a Socialist, gives away her fortune, throws on a simple mackintosh, casually tells her meek husband at the door of their colossally grand house to sell it, goes to the airport (in a chauffeur-driven car), and travels to America. She, too, goes first-class, in spite of her Socialism, because she and André Dussollier have been fated to meet all through the film: in a Lelouch movie, love and the director's sense of convenience conquer all. There is a nice side character (Charles Gérard), an older jailbird turned film producer, who has an interesting expertise in hens. Story and screenplay by Lelouch and Peter Uytterhoeven. In French. (4/7/75) (Fine Arts.)

At Long Last Love—Peter Bogdanovich's stillborn musical comedy, with Burt Reynolds as a bored millionaire playboy, Cybill Shepherd as a spoiled heiress, and sixteen Cole Porter songs. Performed as they are here, their antique smartness sounds smug, though "Find Me a Primitive Man," with Madeline Kahn nudging her thighs together, has some humor. (3/24/75) (Music Hall; through April 23.)

Born Yesterday (1950)—Judy Holliday as a brassy, smart "dumb blonde" who is mistress to a big-time dealer in scrap metal (Broderick Crawford), and William Holden as the journalist who is hired to make her more "couth." When he succeeds, the picture fails; but the first half is good comedy. George Cukor directed, from the play by Garson Kanin. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 21.)

The Boys (1973)—Directed by Richard Ber. In Polish. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 22.)

The Boys in the Band (1970)—A gathering of homosexuals like the gathering of bitchy ladies in "The Women," but with a forties-movie bomber-crew cast: a Catholic, a Jew, a Negro, a hustler, one who is butch, and one who is nellie, and so on. They crack jokes while their hearts are breaking. William Friedkin directed Mart Crowley's adaptation of his own play. (Elgin; April 23. . . . ¶ Olympia; starting April 23.)

A Brief Vacation—Vittorio De Sica's final collaboration with the scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini was on this story of Clara (Florinda Bolkan), a Calabrian peasant who is a factory worker in Milan; resentful, beaten down to a morose stupor, she's also oppressed by her husband (Renato Salvatori), who uses her sexually as if she were a farm beast he owned. When she collapses and is sent to a sanatorium in northern Italy to be cured of tuberculosis, the schizoid picture leaves this working-class grimness behind; it's swoony romanticism from then on, almost like a dressy fantasy starring Elizabeth Taylor. Clara discovers art and spirituality, and she finds a frail, dewy-eyed lover (Daniel Quenaud) who drips nobility as only a narcissistic bad actor can. Sedately sentimental, with Adriana Asti playing a feverishly frisky, dying music-hall entertainer in the gallant-waif Piaf style. In Italian. (3/3/75) (Little Carnegie.)

California Split—Robert Altman's beautiful, smoky, funny film about gambling, with Elliott Gould as a retaliatory-minded joker and George Segal as a magazine writer with something clenched about him. The film seems to be being improvised. We catch at events and personalities by the ends of threads. The sound track of Joseph Walsh's first-rate screenplay is full of murmurs and densely packed with talk, recorded on eight tracks, often with eleven mikes going at once. This is Altman's best film since "McCabe & Mrs. Miller"—comic, loose-limbed, dangerous, with a kindly eye for the out-of-step. (8/19/74) (St. Marks Cinema, and Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

Capone—With Ben Gazzara and Susan Blakely, directed by Steve Carver. (Loews Ciné.)

Cavalcade (1933)—An orgy of British self-congratulation in the restrained, clipped style of Noël Coward, with the added know-how of an American producer (Winfield Sheehan, of Fox) and a Hollywood director (Frank Lloyd). Americans doted on this gilded tear-jerker that began with Clive Brook and his wife, Diana Wynyard, toasting the advent of the twentieth century, and followed the fortunes of their son (Frank Lawton) and their servants (Herbert Mundin and Una O'Connor) up to the present—i.e., when the picture was made. The self-conscious good taste of it all creaks, but Noël Coward knows plenty of tricks and the performers know how to get the most out of his lines. The cast includes Ursula Jeans, Billy Bevan, Beryl Mercer, and John Warburton and Margaret Lindsay honeymooning on the Titanic. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 22.)

Charade (1963)—Widow Audrey Hepburn, looking chic and quite ungrieved and ravishingly pretty, is trying to get back a load of loot secreted by her late husband. Cary Grant helps, and love triumphs. Stanley Donen directed—it's suave, but not up to much. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 16.)

Charles Dead or Alive (1969)—Alain Tanner's Swiss film, made before his "La Salamandre." The hero is a fifty-year-old third-generation watchmaker who suddenly starts, on his firm's hundredth anniversary, to undo his soul as if he were taking a watch apart to see the works. Michel Simon's son, François, plays the hero very finely. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 23.)

Children of Paradise (1945)—A one-of-a-kind film: a sumptuous, romantic epic about the relations between theatre and life, written with wit by Jacques Prévert, and beautifully directed by Marcel Carné. Made during the Occupation but set in the Paris of Balzac, with Jean-Louis Barrault, the incomparable Arletty, Pierre Brasseur, Pierre Renoir, and Maria Casarès. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 20.)

Chinatown—A thriller for grownups—more about greed than about blood-spilling—directed by Roman Polanski. John Huston plays a Biblical figure called Noah Cross; Faye Dunaway is a mysteriously widowed beauty called Mrs. Mulwray, who hires a private eye (Jack Nicholson) to solve the puzzle of her husband's death. Jack Nicholson's performances get better and more lissome every time. The film, set in the thirties, from a script by Robert Towne, is wickedly skillful and funny, and socially alert. (7/1/74) (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2, R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1, and Symphony. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

Claudine (1974)—A Harlem love story that would reflect a sophisticated, knowing exhaustion if it concerned whites, but maintains its stamina, good humor, and cheek because it is played, and mostly made, by blacks. A mother on welfare (Diahann Carroll), with six children, is loved by a garbage man called Roop, himself supporting three children. James Earl Jones plays the character with an endearing mixture of romance, cowardice, and natural sexiness about his beautiful but obstinate catch of a girl. Produced by Hannah Weinstein, directed by John Berry, written by Tina and Lester Pine. (4/29/74) (Olympia; through April 21.)

The Clowns (1971)—Fellini, and a glory. His view of the world has always been that it is like the circus—a land of buffoons, of wounds

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that deliver no hurt. This is the film that exactly and unsentimentally states it. There is a peculiar tenebrous undertow in the quality of the color, as there is in circuses. In Italian. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 21-23.)

The Conversation (1974)—Written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The freezing case history of a wiretapping-and-bugging expert, wonderfully played by Gene Hackman as a man riddled with Catholic guilt and depleted by continual secrecy and self-deception. A terrifying depiction of a ransacked spirit. (4/15/74) (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2, R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1, and Symphony. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

Les Créatures (1966)—Michel Piccoli plays a writer with a pregnant wife (Catherine Deneuve, looking inhumanly beautiful) who has lost the power of speech; Eva Dahlbeck is a hotelkeeper. Complicated, full of gamesmanship and subplots, and maybe only for those who like to play chess—if for them. Agnès Varda wrote and directed. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 17.)

Deep End (1971)—Drama in a public bath. Jerzy Skolimowski, a gifted Pole in exile who has the Polish black trick of pretending to be less serious than he is, makes a halfway-meant film about a desperate young voyeur (John Moulder-Brown) and an enragingly prissy redhead (Jane Asher). (Elgin; April 22.)

The Deluge, Parts I and II (1974)—Directed by Jerzy Hoffman. In Polish. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 24.)

Donkey Skin—Jacques Demy's Cinderella story about Catherine Deneuve dressed up in a donkey skin and working as a skivvy, but we all know she's Chanel No. 5 and the only person whose finger the prince's ring will fit. Wallpaper film, with pretty music by Michel Legrand. In French. (Regency.)

Don't Cry with Your Mouth Full—With Annie Colé, directed by Pascal Thomas. In French. (Paris.)

Earthquake—L.A. gets it. The picture is swill, but it isn't a cheat, like "Airport 1975," which is cut-rate swill. This one is an entertaining marathon of Grade-A destruction effects, with B-picture stock characters spinning through it. Among them are Ava Gardner, the grimly resolute Charlton Heston, and Geneviève Bujold, whose witty style gives the picture its only touch of class. Mark Robson directed. (12/2/74) (New Embassy.)

Emmanuelle—With Sylvia Kristel and Alain Cuny, directed by Just Jaeckin. X-rated. (In French, with subtitles, at the Columbia II, no performances April 21-22; at the St. Marks Cinema, through April 22; and at the Gramercy, starting April 23. . . . ¶ In dubbed English at the Playboy; through April 20.)

Les Enfants Terribles (1950; called "The Strange Ones" when it was first released in this country)—The director, Jean-Pierre Melville, expands Cocteau's novel about the shared disorder and confused narcissism of a brother and sister into a baroque tragicomedy in which the characters move, as compulsively as in a dream, toward self-destruction. With Nicole Stéphane, fiercely elegant as the dominating Elizabeth; Edouard Dermithe as Paul; Renée Cosima as Dargelos and Agatha; Jacques Bernard as Gérard. Cocteau provides cryptic, emblematic narration. The music (Bach-Vivaldi) is one of the few effective film usages of great music. In French. (Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

Eva (1962)—Jeanne Moreau as an elegant, heartless slut, and Stanley Baker as a born victim. Joseph Losey's film, set in Venice and Rome, was meddled with by the producers; what's left has flair and style (maybe too much of each), but the intentions aren't altogether clear. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 23-24.)

Faces (1968)—John Cassavetes' view of the meaninglessness of life for the well-heeled middle-aged. His semi-documentary method is controversial, and what some find agonizingly true and beautiful others may find merely embarrassingly clumsy. With John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel. (Elgin; April 16.)

Fellini Satyricon (1970)—Fellini, basking in sin, in the De Mille godlessness-is-lawlessness tradition. In Italian. (Elgin; starting April 24.)

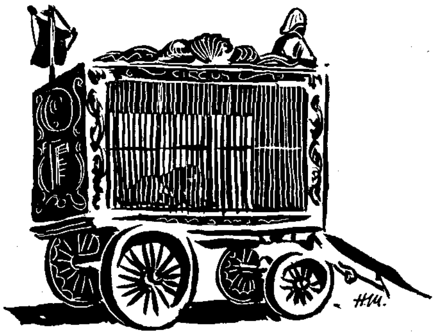
Foreign Correspondent (1940)—Hitchcock appears to have concocted this spy thriller out of all the breathtaking climaxes he'd been hoarding; there's the assassination with the gun concealed in a newsman's camera, the Dutch windmill going against the wind, and a tremendous finale aboard a transatlantic plane from London on the very day war is declared. The plot that links all this is barely functional, and the jaunty reporter-hero (Joel McCrea) is held down a bit when he has to attend to the ever-busy heroine (Laraine Day), but the movie is intermittently first-rate, and the topnotch supporting cast includes George Sanders, Albert Basserman, Herbert Marshall, Edmund Gwenn, Martin Kosleck, Eduardo Cianelli, Barbara Pepper, and Robert Benchley, who also had a hand in the dialogue. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; starting April 23.)

The Four Musketeers—Richard Lester's cheerful solution of how to turn "The Three Musketeers," which ran four hours, into a manageable movie: he simply made two films of it. This is the second. Very likable, with Michael York as the extra musketeer, Roy Kinnear as the trudging dogsbody of the other three (Richard Chamberlain, Frank Finlay, Oliver Reed), Raquel Welch, and splendid comic performances by Faye Dunaway, caparisoned with ringlets, and, of all people, Charlton Heston (Cardinal Richelieu). Written by George MacDonald Fraser, author of the "Flashman" series. (3/31/75) (72nd Street East; starting April 23.)

The Front Page—Ben Hecht's and Charles MacArthur's rowdy and marvellous dream of newspaper life, first produced on the stage in 1928, has here been diminished to the sloppy ordinary. Billy Wilder, the director, and his co-scenarist, I. A. L. Diamond, think that the way to make a dialogue comedy work for modern audiences is to convert the dialogue into noise; their version is a harsh, scrambling-for-laughs gag comedy. Walter Matthau, who gets a chance at a really classy American character—Walter Burns, the funny, mean, egomaniac editor—plays him like a whistle-stop Bear Bryant. Matthau, however, still gets his laughs. Jack Lemmon doesn't; his Hildy Johnson—the best reporter in Chicago—is like a mortuary assistant having a wild fling. There's only one freshly felt performance—Austin Pendleton as Earl Williams, the fuddled anarchist concealed in the famous rolltop desk. (1/27/75) (72nd Street East; through April 22.)

Funny Lady—The moviemakers weren't just going to make a sequel to "Funny Girl"—they were going to kill us. (And they wanted to outdo "Cabaret," besides.) As Fanny Brice, Barbra Streisand is no longer human; she's like a bitchy female impersonator imitating Barbra Streisand. She's in beautiful voice, but her singing is too terrific; it's no longer singing, it's strident overdramatization that turns a song into a big number. The picture is overproduced and badly edited, with a forties-movie-heartbreak plot. A great deal of talent has been badly used, though James Caan has some good scenes as scrubby, anxious Billy Rose, and Streisand is charming in the wittily staged "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store." Ray Stark produced; Herbert Ross directed. The new songs are by Kander and Ebb. (3/17/75) (Loews Tower East, and Loews Orpheum.)

Games (1967)—James Caan as a cold-blooded, fortune-hunter husband, Katharine Ross as his rich, bewildered wife, and Simone Signoret as a mysterious woman in black, fond of gazing into her crystal ball, in a Manhattan-set thriller, with twists that don't do as much for us as they need to. You have to be a real addict to put up with this one. Corpses are encased in plaster to resemble sculpture by George Segal, and the ambience is meant to be chic and modern, but the story is uninvolving, and Curtis Harrington's directing lacks pace. It's handsomely got up, however, and the good cast includes Don Stroud, Estelle Winwood, George Furth, Florence Marly, and Kent Smith. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 18.)



The Godfather, Part II—The daring of Part II is that it enlarges the scope and deepens the meaning of the first film. Visually, Part II is far more complexly beautiful than the first, just as it's thematically richer, more shadowed, fuller. The completed work, contrasting the early manhood of Vito (Robert De Niro) with the life of Michael, his inheritor (Al Pacino), is an epic vision of the corruption of America; this is a bicentennial picture that doesn't insult the intelligence. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola; the script is by Coppola and Mario Puzo. (12/23/74) (Paramount.)

Gone with the Wind (1939)—Nearly four hours of Vivien Leigh, Clark Gable, and thousands of others. Parts of them, that is. With the widening of the image, the actors have been reduced to torsos. (Music Hall; starting April 24.)

The Grande Bouffe (1973)—Slang for the big blowout, the grand guzzle. A funny, grim parable about the well-off and Rubens-like of the world. Members of a hermetic houseparty, ruined by having no sense of consequence, set out joyfully to eat themselves to death. With Marcello Mastroianni, Michel Piccoli, Ugo Tognazzi, and Philippe Noiret. Directed by Marco Ferreri. In French. (9/24/73) (Elgin; starting April 24.)

The Great Waldo Pepper—One hundred-percent-pure-plastic adolescent male fantasy. It's set in the twenties, with Robert Redford as a First World War aviator who spends some time barnstorming in the Midwest and then goes to Hollywood, where he lives out his dream of fighting the No. 1 Imperial German ace. William Goldman's coldhearted, clever script and the director George Roy Hill's fresh-painted storytelling almost amount to a style: total inauthenticity. (3/24/75) (Murray Hill, and 86th St. East.)

Harry & Tonto—Directed by Paul Mazursky and written by him with Josh Greenfeld. Harry (Art Carney) is a limping old man with a buoyant spirit who buys cheap food for himself and good liver for his cat, a heavyset marmalade companion called Tonto. The old Lear has three disappointing children strung across the country, whom he visits after the demolition of his one-room flat. He eventually decides they represent a rope on his liberty. The narrative sounds sentimental, but the film isn't. (8/26/74) (Gramercy; through April 20. . . . ¶ Olympia; through April 21.)

Hearts and Minds—A documentary about the United States involvement in Vietnam, directed by Peter Davis. (Cinema I.)

High School (1969)—What we see in Fred Wiseman's documentary, shot in a high school in a large Eastern city, is so familiar and so extraordinarily evocative that a feeling of empathy with the students floods over us. How did we live through it? How did we keep any spirit? (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 21.)

Husbands (1970)—Three actors (John Cassavetes, Peter Falk, and Ben Gazzara) playing three suburban husbands in a semi-improvised movie directed by Cassavetes. The actors have occasional intense and affecting moments, going through emotions that they set off in each other, but Cassavetes is the sort of man who is dedicated to stripping people of their pretenses and laying bare their souls. Inevitably, the results are agonizingly banal. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 24.)

If . . . (1969)—Lindsay Anderson uses an English school for boys as a metaphor for a rotting traditional society. An attempted epic on student revolt, with too many muddy undercurrents. With Malcolm McDowell. (Elgin; April 17-19.)

I Never Sang for My Father (1970)—Robert Anderson's drama about the hell of trying

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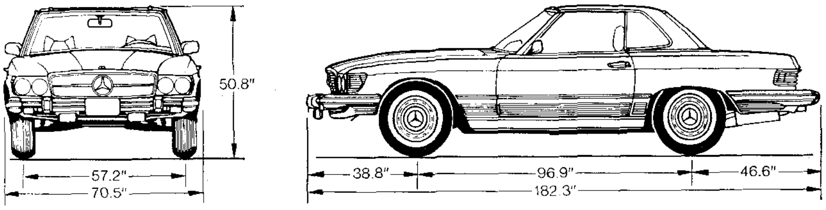

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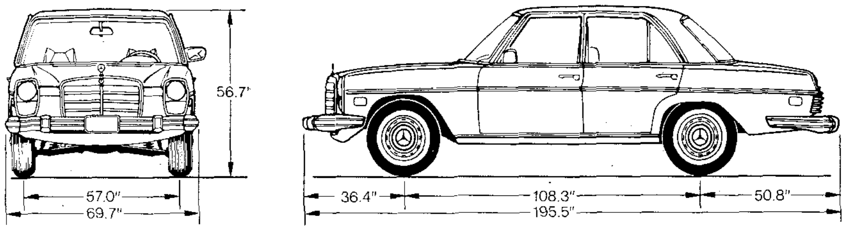

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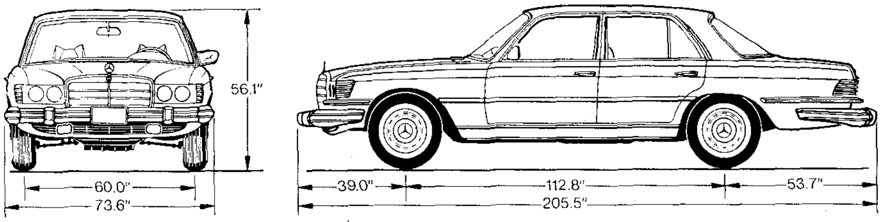

Mercedes-Benz 450 Series. 450SE Sedan and 280S, above; 450SEL is four inches longer.

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240D (Sedan)	4 cyl. ohc (fuel injected)	146.7	108.3	195.5	3205	$9,479
300D (Sedan)	5 cyl. ohc (fuel injected)	183.4	108.3	195.5	3450	$11,782
230 (Sedan)	4 cyl. ohc	140.8	108.3	195.5	3230	$9,357
280 (Sedan)	6 cyl. dohc	167.6	108.3	195.5	3560	$12,325
280C (Coupe)	6 cyl. dohc	167.6	108.3	195.5	3570	$13,063
280S (Sedan)	6 cyl. dohc	167.6	112.8	205.5	3920	$14,548
450SE (Sedan)	V-8 ohc (fuel injected)	275.8	112.8	205.5	4100	$17,713
450SEL (Sedan)	V-8 ohc (fuel injected)	275.8	116.5	209.4	4140	$19,106
450SL (Sports)	V-8 ohc (fuel injected)	275.8	96.9	182.3	3780	$17,056
450SLC (Sports Coupe)	V-8 ohc (fuel injected)	275.8	111.0	196.4	3820	$21,307

*East and Gulf Coast P.O.E. West Coast higher. *Exclude* State, Local taxes, transportation. *Include* suggested Dealer Pre-Delivery charges. Subject to change without notice.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

to get along with one's parents. As ordinary as a TV problem play, yet by its surprisingly austere tough-mindedness the movie transcends that genre. Gene Hackman is the son, Melvyn Douglas the self-righteous father. Gil Cates directed. (Elgin; April 20, one performance, at noon.)

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)—A B-picture classic. This plain and inexpensive piece of science fiction employs few of the resources of the cinema (to put it mildly), but it has an idea that confirms everyone's suspicions. People are being turned into vegetables—and who can tell the difference? Kevin McCarthy and Dana Wynter, who try to cling to their animality and individuality, seem inexplicably backward to the rest of the townspeople. With Carolyn Jones, and Sam Peckinpah (who worked on the script) in a few bits. Directed by Don Siegel. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 16, 17, and 19.)

Isn't Life Wonderful (1924)—D. W. Griffith, who, in addition to everything else, had an extraordinary feeling for the documentary aspects of film, shot this story about what war does to people in Germany after the First World War. A pioneer work of neo-realism, which influenced the Italian films made after the Second World War, it was perhaps Griffith's last great burst of creative energy. The stars are Carol Dempster (at her best, which is still not overpowering) and Neil Hamilton. The locations include Berlin. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 20.)

It Should Happen to You (1954)—Judy Holliday in a pleasantly erratic satirical comedy; the targets—advertising, TV, and urban gullibility—are rather easily pinked, but the scenarist, Garson Kanin, and the director, George Cukor, don't loiter over them for long. The heroine, who longs for celebrity, takes her life savings and places her name in giant letters across a billboard in Columbus Circle. Before long, she is as inescapably in the public eye as one of the Gabors. She also tosses about in romantic indecision: Should she give her heart to an honest documentary-filmmaker (Jack Lemmon) and say farewell to the big time, or should she surrender herself to the sudsy embraces of a soap manufacturer (Peter Lawford)? With Connie Gilchrist, Melville Cooper, and Michael O'Shea, who is particularly funny as a seedy entrepreneur. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 21.)

Janis—A documentary about the late Janis Joplin, including concert appearances and interviews. (Art; through April 17.)

Je T'Aime, Je T'Aime (1968)—The sorry thing about this dehumanized Alain Resnais film, which comes on with heavy self-depreciation as a science-fiction story, is that it has nothing much but gall, raising most of the big issues of the twentieth century and then dropping them with a clang. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 17.)

Le Jour Se Lève ("Daybreak;" 1939)—The director, Marcel Carné, and the writer, Jacques Prévert, collaborated on this justly famous film about a decent sort of man (Jean Gabin) who is forced to become a murderer by the masochistic trickery of the man he kills (Jules Berry). Perhaps the finest of the French poetic melodramas. With Arletty, and a good score by Maurice Jaubert. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 16.)

King of Hearts (1967)—Philippe de Broca makes a lulling and rather winsome period comedy about a 1918 soldier in an evacuated village now inhabited only by zoo animals and lunatics in fancy dress. With Alan Bates. In French and English. (D. W. Griffith; through April 23.)

The Last Detail (1974)—About three seamen. Otis Young and dissipated sentimentalist Jack Nicholson are dispatched to take a morose eighteen-year-old (Randy Quaid) from the brig in Norfolk, Virginia, to the naval prison in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The movie is the record of their dallying, beer-soaked journey and of their self-discoveries en route. It is distinguished by the fine performances of Nicholson and Quaid, and by well-orchestrated profane dialogue, but visually it is relentlessly lower-depths gloomy, and the material, though often very funny, is programmed to wrench your heart. It's about the blasted lives of people who discover their humanity too late. Hal Ashby directed; adapted by Robert Towne from Darryl Ponicsan's book. (2/11/74) (Playboy; through April 20.)

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Law and Disorder—While you're watching this comedy about the frustrations and foul-ups of New Yorkers Carroll O'Connor and Ernest Borgnine as they try to protect their families by organizing an auxiliary-police unit, you can tell how the scenes were meant to play and why they don't. You can see that the gifted Czech director Ivan Passer doesn't have the unconscious equipment for the look and feel of ordinary American life, and that he is trying to strike a compromise between his feelings and the demands of the American marketing system—and satisfying neither. O'Connor has some fine restrained moments, and Alan Arbus contributes an entertaining bit, but the film is a painful failure. Passer is trying to do the sort of thing that gets louder laughs than his own kind of comedy; it is the case of an artist trying to do what clods can do better. (10/21/74) (Playboy; starting April 23.)

Lenny—The earnest Bob Fosse film starring Dustin Hoffman is for audiences who want to believe that Lenny Bruce was a saintly gadfly who was martyred for having lived before their time. Hoffman makes a serious, honorable try, but he's the wrong kind of actor to play Bruce. Hoffman is a nice boy; Bruce was uncompromisingly not nice. Valerie Perrine is touching as Honey, and Gary Morton has a fine bit as the type of comic who knew how to keep his public happy. (11/18/74) (Greenwich, and Thalia; through April 17. . . . ¶ U. A. East; through April 20. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through April 22.)

The Long Goodbye (1973)—Robert Altman kisses off the private-eye form as gracefully as "Beat the Devil" finished off the cycle of the international-intrigue thriller. Less accidental than "Beat the Devil," it's just about as funny, though quicker-witted and dreamier, in soft, mellow color and volatile images. Based on Raymond Chandler's book, the picture stars Elliott Gould as Marlowe; thinner and lither, he gives his best performance yet, as a wryly forlorn man, still driving a 1948 Lincoln Continental and trying to behave like Bogart. With Nina van Pallandt, Sterling Hayden, and Mark Rydell. (10/22/73) (Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

The Lovers of Teruel (1962)—An elaborate ballet-drama of romantic tragedy. Ludmilla Tcherina dances the role of a doomed, demented girl, and then finds that life has cast her in the same role. More than a bit much, with dialogue such as "What good is my body if you cannot have my soul?" Directed by Raymond Rouleau. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 20.)

Macbeth (1971)—Roman Polanski shows such literal horror that there is no horror left to imagine. He treats the play not as a great cautionary nightmare but as an illustration of how power normally changes hands. The handsome, intelligent, and well-acted production succeeds as vivid melodrama but reduces Shakespeare's meanings to something almost complacently lucid. (Elgin; April 20-21.)

The Maids—From Jean Genet's play. The fourth presentation in the American Film Theatre's second season (primarily subscription). With Glenda Jackson, Susannah York, and Vivien Merchant, directed by Christopher Miles. The film will be shown on April 21 and 22 only, at 2 and 8, the Art, Gramercy, Byron (formerly the First Avenue Screening Room), Columbia II, Juliet 2, Trans-Lux 85th St., U. A. East, Greenwich, Guild, Playboy, Loews 83rd St., and New Yorker. Some extra tickets may be available at certain theatres; for information call 489-8820.

Memories of Underdevelopment (1973)—A beautifully complicated and subtle picture from Cuba, with an actor named Sergio Corrieri playing a thirty-eight-year-old writer whose sense of stasis must practically amount to counterrevolution in Castro's new society. The sophisticated flashes of happiness, yearning, and discontent that are expressed so freely in the picture are a political as well as a filmmaking wonder. The director, who would rank with the highest in Europe, is Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. He also wrote the screenplay, from a novel by Edmundo Desnoes. In Spanish. (5/26/73) (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 21-22.)

The Middle of the World—One of the best, most innovative films about the nature of passionate love to come out of Europe since "Scenes from a Marriage" and the pictures of Eric Rohmer. This is a film of tremendous simplicity with a complex intellectual underlay, directed by Alain Tanner and written by him with the English art critic and novelist John Berger. (They did "La Salamandre" together, and Tanner made "Charles Dead or Alive" and "Le Retour d'Afrique.") The hero (Philippe Léotard) is a married engineer who is being manipulated into becoming a local politician; the heroine (Olimpia Carlisi) is an Italian barmaid. Opposites meet, and the film is a record of the two characters' ability to change. Lucid and thoughtful, shot in long takes without cuts. And also very funny at times, and truly erotic. A trailbreaker. In French. (3/31/75) (68th St. Playhouse.)

Minnie and Moskowitz (1971)—John Cassavetes built this movie on a small conceit—a love affair between two people who are wildly unsuited to each other—and it doesn't work. The picture drivels on about the joys of spontaneity, while Gena Rowlands and Seymour Cassel remain embarrassingly wrong for each other. (Elgin; April 16. . . . ¶ Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 24.)

Murder on the Orient Express—This all-star version of an Agatha Christie antiquity is utterly inoffensive, and audiences appear to be so hungry for this sort of entertainment that maybe it hardly matters that it isn't very good. Vanessa Redgrave, Rachel Roberts, and Ingrid Bergman are standouts in a cast that includes John Gielgud, Lauren Bacall, Wendy Hiller, Sean Connery, and Albert Finney as Hercule Poirot. Sidney Lumet directed. (12/9/74) (Cinema Village, and Embassy 72nd St. . . . ¶ Juliet 2; through April 20.)

Murder She Said (1962)—Margaret Rutherford as Jane Marple, a maiden-aunt amateur criminologist, in an amiable adaptation of an Agatha Christie novel. With Arthur Kennedy and Stringer Davis; George Pollock directed. (New Yorker; through April 20.)

Murder at the Gallop (1963)—Modest, relaxed follow-up to "Murder She Said." Margaret Rutherford again as Agatha Christie's dotty, blustering Miss Marple; she rides a horse in this one and does the Twist, as well as attempting to solve crimes. With Robert Morley, Flora Robson, Stringer Davis, James Villiers, and Duncan Lamont. George Pollock directed. (New Yorker; through April 20.)

None but the Lonely Heart (1944)—Taken from Richard Llewellyn's novel; directed by Clifford Odets. The chap here is a tragic hero on the borderline between London's gentility and London's low life. He is gifted with perfect pitch and a floundering wish for poetic self-expression. The cast includes Cary Grant, taking himself rather sombrely, Barry Fitzgerald (Irish, you may remember), and Ethel Barrymore. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; through April 19.)

The Ox-Bow Incident (1943)—A Western set in Nevada in 1885 that is also an attempt at a poetic tragedy about mob violence. Two cowboys (Henry Fonda and Harry Morgan) ride into a small, lonely cattle town and become involved in the hysteria of a lynch mob. Three innocent men (Dana Andrews, Anthony Quinn, and Francis Ford) are hanged, while we see not only their fear and despair but the varied motives of the members of the posse who take justice into their hands. It's easy to be put off by the studio sets and lighting and by the forties approach to a "serious" subject, but the director, William Wellman, has made the characters so vivid that after many years people may still recall Frank Conroy as the sadistic Southern major, and the rapid changes of expression of William Eythe, as his son. With Harry Davenport, Leigh Whipper, and Jane Darwell as the raucous old lady who enjoys the excitement. Lamar Trotti's script omits some of the more interesting ambiguities of the Walter Van Tilburg Clark novel. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 21.)

Painters Painting (1973)—Painters talking, mostly, often combining the knowledgeable with the dopey. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 19-20.)

The Passenger—Antonioni's film about an estranged London TV news reporter trying to flee the coop of himself. Everything has staled for him—work and personal life both—and Antonioni makes, for the first time in his career, a clear causal connection between a character's situation and his environment. The reporter is on the track of a story in a remote part of Africa. He seizes the chance to exchange his identity for a dead man's, and takes on the dead man's slowly revealed undercover missions, which endow him with political purpose. The film is psychologically complex, dwelling on parallel themes about disjuncture and ambiguity, but also declarative in a way that is unique in Antonioni's work; as well as that, it is a picture of astonishing aesthetic beauty and technical innovation. Jack Nicholson, as the reporter, gives a performance that is a marvel of insight about a man whose chances are running out. Maria Schneider exquisitely plays a soft-voiced, attentive stranger whom he meets in his new identity. (4/14/75) (Baronet.)

Pearls in the Crown (1971)—Directed by Kazimierz Kutz. In Polish. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 18.)

Penny Serenade (1941)—Irene Dunne and Cary Grant, who had made audiences laugh in "The Awful Truth" and "My Favorite Wife," jerked tears this time. They play a childless couple who adopt an infant, learn to love it, as well as feed it and bathe it, and then lose it. The director, George Stevens, dragged his feet (the picture is over two hours long) and he wasn't very subtle, yet he respected the sentimental story and made it convincing to a wide audience; many people talk about this picture as if it had really been deeply moving. With Edgar Buchanan and Beulah Bondi; the screenplay is by Morrie Ryskind. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; through April 19.)

Pépé le Moko (1936)—Superb entertainment. A classic romantic tragedy of the thirties, and one of the most compelling of all French films, yet seen by few Americans, because it was remade in Hollywood two years later as "Algiers," starring Charles Boyer and "introducing" Hedy Lamarr. "Algiers" was so closely copied from "Pépé le Moko" that look-alikes were cast in many of the roles, and some sequences were followed shot by shot, but "Algiers" is glamorous pop that doesn't compare to the original, directed by Julien Duvivier and starring Jean Gabin as the gangster who finds love but can't find his freedom. No one who saw "Pépé" is likely to forget the scene in which the homesick-for-Paris Gabin looks at a Métro ticket and recites the names of the stations. With Mireille Balin, Marcel Dalio, Gaston Modot, Gabriel Gabrio, and Charpin. In French. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 22.)

Politics (1931)—That great, gutsy pair of slapstick comics Marie Dressler and Polly Moran, in a follow-up to their box-office success "Reducing." This time, they become involved in feminist activities and small-town politics, and they triumph by employing Lysistrata's tactics. Dressler is elected mayor, but the picture is Polly Moran's—she has a few minutes that almost compensate for the tedious underworld subplot. Charles F. Riesner directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 20.)

The Prisoner of Second Avenue—Jack Lemmon, as a New York advertising executive, gets fired, feels worthless, and has a nervous breakdown; Anne Bancroft is his devoted wife. Vaguely about urban despair, full of bad jokes. Melvin Frank has directed the movie version of Neil Simon's sitcom in his usual sagging, fifties style, but probably there isn't a filmmaker in the world who could substantially improve this picture except by throwing out the play altogether. (3/10/75) (Sutton.)

Prosperity (1932)—The jolly pair Marie Dressler and Polly Moran, in the most stereotyped of their comedy duets. This one is about the economic mess of the Depression, with its runs on the banks, and barter is seriously presented as a solution. Polly Moran, who is too harshly handled throughout, gets smashed in the face with a wedding cake, and Dressler has too big a heart of gold. Still, they get some laughs. Sam Wood directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 20.)

Rebel Without a Cause (1955)—James Dean as the classic misunderstood kid, in the generation-gap soap opera that had more emotional resonance for kids than many much better movies. With Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, and—remember?—Dennis Hopper. Nicholas Ray directed. (Elgin; April 17-19.)

Reducing (1931)—Marie Dressler and Polly Moran in a hit slapstick comedy set in a beauty shop. This isn't the *grande-dame* Dressler of "Dinner at Eight;" she's treated as if she's any ordinary fat and noisy woman. At the time, she got a big laugh on the line "Lindbergh came to take me flying but I couldn't go;" it's a gem compared to her other lines, yet this pair of low-comedy troupers do all that can be done with corny, sometimes feeble material. Charles F. Riesner directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 20.)

Report to the Commissioner—Another entry in the "French Connection" sweepstakes, this one smartened up with the "Serpico" theme, but to no avail. It's a slovenly production, and the suspense never gets going. Michael Moriarty plays the hippie undercover detective destroyed by his blundering, callous superiors in the New York City Police Department. Moriarty is required to fall apart at the end, but he can't wait for the climactic collapse, and he begins disintegrating before you've settled in your seat. With Yaphet Kotto, giving a respectable performance, against all odds, and a twittering blond ingénue, Susan Blakely, who is supposed to be a hot-shot narc. Adapted from James Mills' novel; directed by Milton Katselas. (2/10/75) (Thalia; starting April 18. . . . ¶ Greenwich; April 18-20 and April 23-24.)

Repulsion (1965)—Roman Polanski's clinical horror film, recording the deterioration of a murderous, terrified girl, played by Catherine Deneuve. (Elgin; April 20-21.)

Rififi (1956)—A quartet of thieves breaks into a jewelry store, and the director, Jules Dassin, who made this picture in France (and in French), eliminated all dialogue for a tense half hour as we watch how they do it. It is thoroughly engrossing, because we see the criminals as craftsmen, and we celebrate their teamwork, their finesse, their triumph. The film also provides nasty glimpses of underworld Parisian prostitutes and hopheads. "Rififi" is the granddaddy of a batch of suspense films featuring how to knock over safes or break into banks and museums, but it's not all that good. With Jean Servais, Robert Manuel, Carl Mohner, and Dassin as the four; and Robert Hossein, Marie Sabouret, Magali Noel. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 22.)

The Rocking Horse Winner (1950)—An intelligent, little-known version of the D. H. Lawrence story. A child (the marvellous John Howard Davies, who also played Oliver Twist in the David Lean film) uses his second sight to rescue his parents; the painful part is that he lacks first sight—the judgment that would enable him to see that they are already destroyed. The enduringly beautiful but not notoriously gifted Valerie Hobson gives her best (maybe her only) performance as his mother. (She is phenomenal in the pawnshop episode.) With John Mills and Ronald Squire. Anthony Pelissier directed. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 19.)

Rosebud—Thriller about the Middle East, with no great thrills and no thoughtfulness at all. It has an international cast of actors who speak English as though they were dolphins of high degree who had learned the language from phonograph records. Five girl teenagers, four of them heirs to fortunes, are hijacked by an Arab terrorist under the orders of a loopy Muslim-converted Englishman called Sloat (Richard Attenborough). He is foiled by Peter O'Toole, using the cover of a job on *Newsweek* to disguise the fact that he is working for the C.I.A. Moral confusion abounds in the film; Otto Preminger, who directed, has a much finer intelligence than this. The fault lies mostly with the inane screenplay, which was adapted by Erik Lee Preminger, Otto's son, from a best-seller by Joan Hemingway, Ernest's granddaughter, and Paul Bonnecarrère. (4/7/75) (Plaza, and Paramount.)

Rosemary's Baby (1968)—Mia Farrow, John Cassavetes, and Ruth Gordon in a gothic-gynecological horror film, some of it shot in the expensive brown depths of the Dakota, on Central Park West. Directed by Roman Polanski: funny, horrible, spiked with knowingness and thriller twinges. (Elgin; April 22.)

La Salamandre (1971)—A Swiss film (made in French, with English subtitles), directed by Alain Tanner from a script that he wrote in collaboration with an English art critic and novelist named John Berger. There are three main characters: an imperishable little lizard of a girl called Rosemonde (Bulle Ogier), a huge-framed, goofy-looking journalist named

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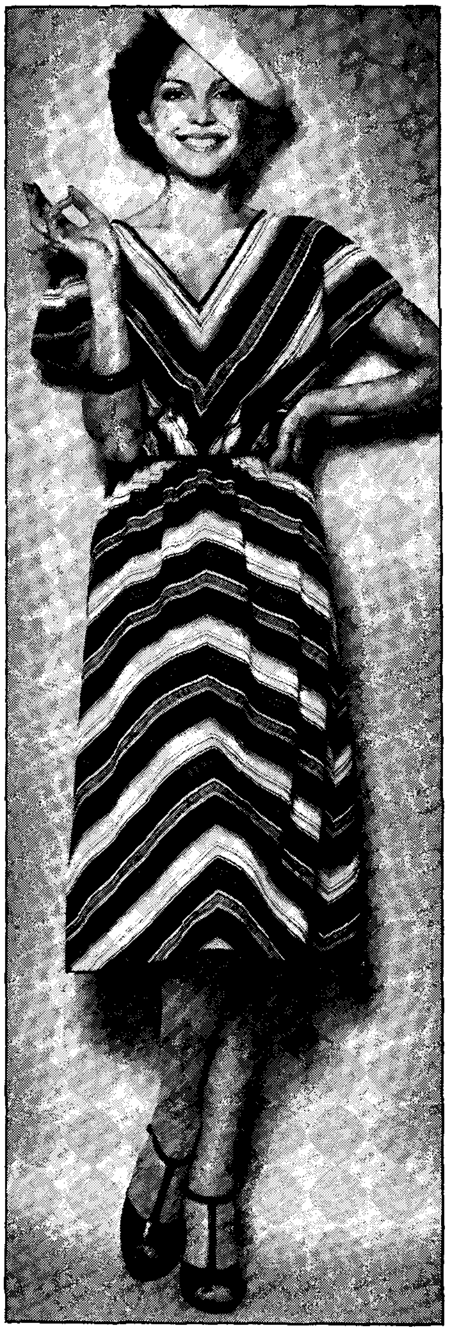

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Pierre, with a lopsided face and a hopeful view of life (Jean-Luc Bideau), and a low-key, lovable writer called Paul, with a lugubrious mustache like a Victorian bather's (Jacques Denis). The film is full of intellect and gay clarity. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 23.)

Salvation (1971)—Directed by Edward Zebrowski. In Polish. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 17.)

Savage Messiah (1972)—Another of Ken Russell's unstable satires on romantic artists: it's Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's turn this time. Russell makes prankish, venomous jokes about the Vorticists, the suffragettes, and sensual art lovers. As the hero, Scott Antony is like a young, even less talented Rock Hudson or Stewart Granger, but as his platonic lover, Sophie Gaudier-Brzeska, Dorothy Tutin is a brilliant shrew—comic, high-powered, and erotically nasty. (Bleecker St. Cinema; April 16-18.)

Shadow of a Doubt (1942)—The setting is quiet, clean, sleepy Santa Rosa, California; it is invaded by a psychopathic killer (Joseph Cotten), who comes to visit his unsuspecting and adoring relatives. Alfred Hitchcock considers this fine thriller (from a script principally by Thornton Wilder) to be his best American film, and he may be right. With Patricia Collinge, Teresa Wright, Hume Cronyn, Henry Travers. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; starting April 23.)

Shampoo—Warren Beatty, as a Beverly Hills hairdresser, in a sex roundelay set in the Beatles sixties of miniskirts and strobe lights. Exploited for gags, this yummy idea for a movie might have turned into no more than a saucy romp, but the way it has been done, the joke expands the more you think about it. The film opens on Election Eve, November 4, 1968, and ends the day after Nixon's and Agnew's victory; the people whirling in and out of bed include Julie Christie, Goldie Hawn, Jack Warden, Lee Grant, Tony Bill, and Carrie Fisher. This sophisticated farce, directed by Hal Ashby from a script by Robert Towne and Beatty (who is also the producer), may be put down as frivolous just because it really isn't. It's a very uncompromising film, and it's going to cause dissension. (2/17/75) (Coronet.)

Sleuth (1972)—At first, the elation of seeing Laurence Olivier in a big role is sufficient to give this Joseph L. Mankiewicz transcription of the Anthony Shaffer play (about an eccentric author of detective novels and his prey—Michael Caine) a high spirit, and Olivier seems to be having a ripsnorting old time. But the cleverness of Shaffer's excessive literacy wears down, and the stupid tricks the two characters play on each other keep grinding on. It's Olivier in the kind of material he outgrew more than thirty years ago. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 18.)

Some Like It Hot (1959)—A fifties comedy set in the Prohibition era, with transvestism, impotence, role confusion, and borderline inversion—and all hilariously innocent. Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are the female impersonators who join a girls' band, and Marilyn Monroe and Joe E. Brown are their somewhat confused love partners. With George Raft, Pat O'Brien, and Nehemiah Persoff. Billy Wilder directed. (Bleecker St. Cinema, April 18-20.)

Stavisky—Alain Resnais' death song for thirties elegance, featuring a silver Hispano-Suiza, an Art Deco diamond necklace, baskets of white hothouse flowers, and silvery-white skies The film seems to be a reverie on façades and contrasts, in which the swindler-charmer Stavisky (Jean-Paul Belmondo), who hides his past, is paired with his friend Baron Raoul (Charles Boyer), whose character is enriched by his background. Resnais directs as if vitality would be a sin against art, and the characters are no more than emblems. He has a beautiful technique, but it's not an expressive technique This is an icy, high-minded white-telephone movie. The script is by Jorge Semprun. In French. (1/20/75) (Cinema II.)

The Stepford Wives—The first women's-lib gothic—hardly the landmark the world has been waiting for Besides, it's so tastefully tame that there's no suspense Taken from an Ira Levin novel that might have been written by a computer, it's about the encroaching horror of suburban blandness, in this acount, the responsibility for suburban women's becoming overgroomed deadheads, obsessed with waxed, antiseptic households, is placed totally on the men. Katharine Ross plays the young New Yorker who moves to Stepford and discovers that the wives have been robotized by their husbands. Written by William Goldman and directed by Bryan Forbes, the picture is literal in a way that seems a wasting disease. With Paula Prentiss, Nanette Newman, Peter Masterson, and Patrick O'Neal. (2/24/75) (Playboy, and Olympia; starting April 23.)

The Sting (1973)—Paul Newman, Robert Redford, and director George Roy Hill trying to recapture the box-office glow of "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." This time, the happy twosome are cardsharps and swindlers of the thirties: the mood isn't as coyly lyrical as before—the first blush of their romance has faded. It's a visually claustrophobic, mechanically plotted movie that's meant to be a roguishly charming entertainment, and many people probably consider it just that. With Robert Shaw as the stiff-necked menace. (12/31/73) (Guild; through April 17. . . . ¶ St. Marks Cinema; starting April 23.)

Sunday Bloody Sunday (1971)—John Schlesinger directed this complex, remarkably modulated study of the breakup of two love affairs, from a screenplay by Penelope Gilliatt. An unusual film—perhaps a classic. With Glenda Jackson, Peter Finch, and Murray Head. (Elgin; April 23.)

Swan Lake (1960)—A Russian film, performed by Maya Plisetskaya, Nicolai Fadeyechev, and the Bolshoi Ballet. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 20.)

Ten Little Indians—The third remake of the Agatha Christie classic, with Oliver Reed, Elke Sommer, and Richard Attenborough. Directed by Peter Collinson. (Eastside Cinema, and U. A. East; starting April 23.)

Titanic (1953)—In 1912, the Titanic, the largest ship in the world, struck an iceberg while on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York and sank. Of the 2,207 people aboard, only 690 survived. The disaster was one of the most terrifying and fascinating in maritime history, but one wouldn't guess it from this movie. The scriptwriters (Charles Brackett, Walter Reisch, and Richard Breen) describe the emotional ups and downs of an unbelievable American fop (Clifton Webb); his estranged wife (Barbara Stanwyck), whom he is trying to win back; and their dreary kids. While the Titanic goes racing along, Webb and Stanwyck argue the respective merits of the Continent and the Middle West as a place to bring up children, until Stanwyck gets so heated about the advantages of the prairie that she informs him that she's cuckolded him and his son isn't even his. Unstrung by this information, Webb dashes to the ship's bar and plays bridge furiously for many hours. It should be funny, but it isn't even that. In standard "Grand Hotel" style, the cast includes an unfrocked priest (Richard Basehart), an obtrusive bore (Allyn Joslyn), a rich and salty Western lady (Thelma Ritter), and the doomed master of the ship (Brian Aherne). Jean Negulesco directed; the actual sinking looks like a nautical tragedy on the pond in Central Park. (Theatre 80 St. Marks, April 22.)

Tommy—The famous rock opera composed and sung by The Who, turned into a clamorous film by Ken Russell. Like many mindless satires, it fallaciously respects and exploits what it seeks to criticize. For instance, it pretends to be severe about the false idols of our era, but it is exceedingly religious about show biz and success. Lots of psychedelic shocks and comic-strip effects. Ann-Margret is appealing when she doesn't have to fling herself about. Roger Daltrey plays Tommy. (4/7/75) (Ziegfeld.)

Touch and Go—With Michel Piccoli, Marlène Jobert, and Michael York, directed by Philippe de Broca. In French. (D. W. Griffith, starting April 24.)

The Towering Inferno—Disaster blockbuster, with each scene of someone horribly in flames presented as a feat for the audience's delectation. These incendiary deaths and the falls from high up in the hundred-and-thirty-eight-floor tallest skyscraper in the world are the film's only feats. Paul Newman and Steve McQueen mutter heroic sentiments, and Faye Dunaway manages to look goddessy-beautiful through it all. John Guillermin directed, Irwin Allen produced, Sterling Silliphant wrote the series of bloopers that make up the script. (12/30/74) (Trans-Lux East.)

The Trail of the Lonesome Pine (1935)—Made in pale picture-postcard colors (blue hills and green trees), this folk Western about the feud of Tollivers and Falins is awfully pokey and loaded with fake mythmaking, yet it has lovely, affecting qualities—some attributable to Henry Hathaway's direction; more to Sylvia Sidney's and Henry Fonda's youth and talent; and some to Fuzzy Knight's singing of "Twilight on the Trail." Fred MacMurray plays the young mining engineer who comes into the backwoods community and falls in love with Sylvia Sidney (so does the entire audience). The producer, Walter Wanger, provided a big cast, including Fred Stone, Beulah Bondi, Nigel Bruce, Alan Baxter, and Richard Carle for this first three-color-process outdoor picture. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 21.)

Two for the Road (1967)—Glossy comedy by Stanley Donen about two lovers, though not about love, which isn't in his range. Frederic Raphael did the competent but unfelt screenplay, and the cast includes Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney. Finney looks as if he is in a role too tight for him. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 16.)

A Woman Under the Influence—The writer-director John Cassavetes is under the influence of R. D. Laing, and he presents an illustration of Laing's scapegoat theory of schizophrenia, with Gena Rowlands as the helpless victim of a bullying husband (Peter Falk) and a repressive society. Cassavetes swathes the Laingian romanticism in wet blankets; the scenes are often unshaped, and so rudderless that the meanings don't emerge. Rowlands externalizes schizophrenic dissolution: she fragments before our eyes. But her prodigious performance is enough for half a dozen tours de force—it's exhausting. Nothing she does is memorable, because she does so much. (12/9/74) (Columbia I. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through April 22.)

Women in Love (1970)—Ken Russell's purple pastiche—a gothic sex fantasy on themes from D. H. Lawrence. It's frequently impressive, but if you want to know what the characters are about, you'd do well to read the book first. With Glenda Jackson, Alan Bates, and Oliver Reed. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; April 19.)

The Yakuza—An attempt to sell a romantic view of gangsterism in an exotic setting. The yakuza are Japanese mobsters, and one of the items in their "code" is that you can show penitence for an offense against the mob chieftain by slicing off your little finger and presenting it to him. Robert Mitchum plays an American private eye who goes to Japan to rescue an American girl kidnapped by yakuza; he enlists the aid of a "retired" yakuza, a master-teacher of swordsmanship (Takakura Ken), and they fight side by side, the gun and the sword. At the end, Mitchum realizes that he has offended the swordsman and commits his act of penitence. A swaggeringly meretricious fairytale, overloaded with exposition, and solemn when it means to be Orientally inscrutable. Richard Jordan, as Mitchum's bodyguard, gives the film its only fresh, unexpected moments; the director, Sydney Pollack, doesn't seem to understand how action-film mechanisms operate. (3/24/75) (Beekman.)

Young Frankenstein—A farce-parody of Hollywood's mad-scientist movies. To go to when your rhythm is slowed down and you're too tired to think, you have to let this Mel Brooks comedy do everything for you, because that's the only way it works. If you accept the silly, zizzy obviousness, it can make you laugh helplessly. Gene Wilder is the old Baron's scientist-grandson, Peter Boyle is the new Monster, and Madeline Kahn is the scientist's fiancée, who becomes the Monster's bride. The picture is in black-and-white, which holds it visually close to the films it takes off from It's Brooks's most sustained piece of moviemaking—the laughs never let up. (12/30/74) (Waverly, and Festival.)

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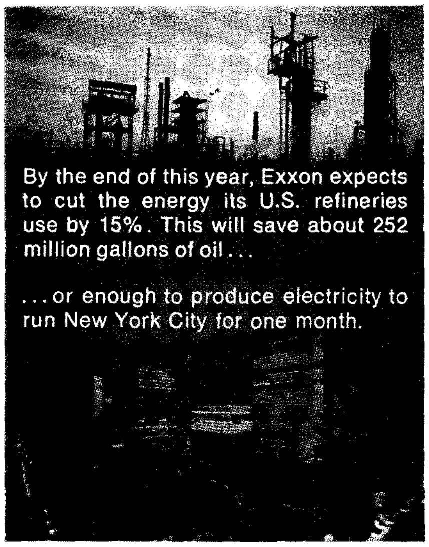
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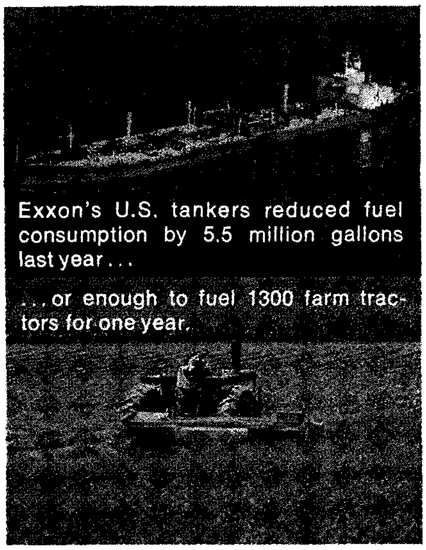
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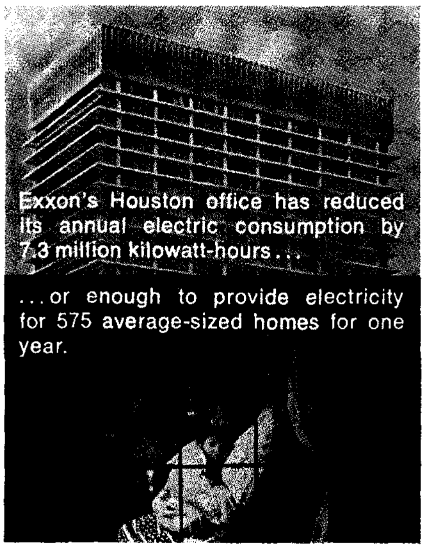
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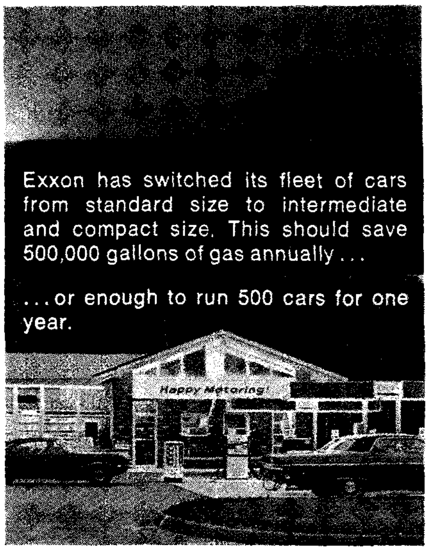
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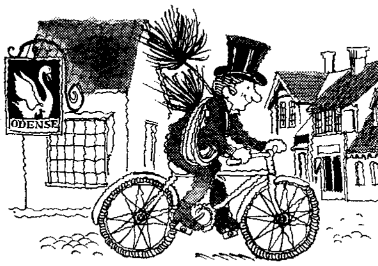

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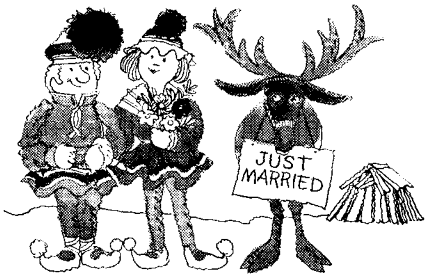

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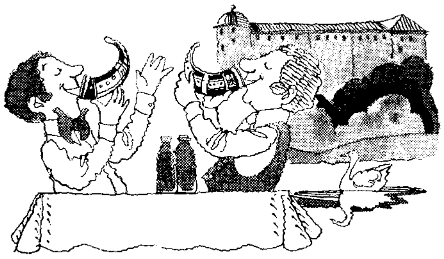

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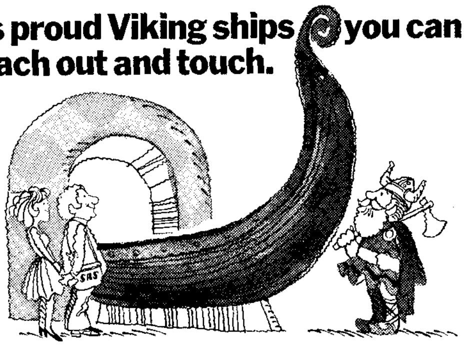

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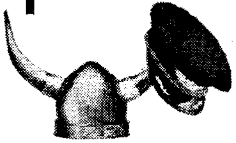

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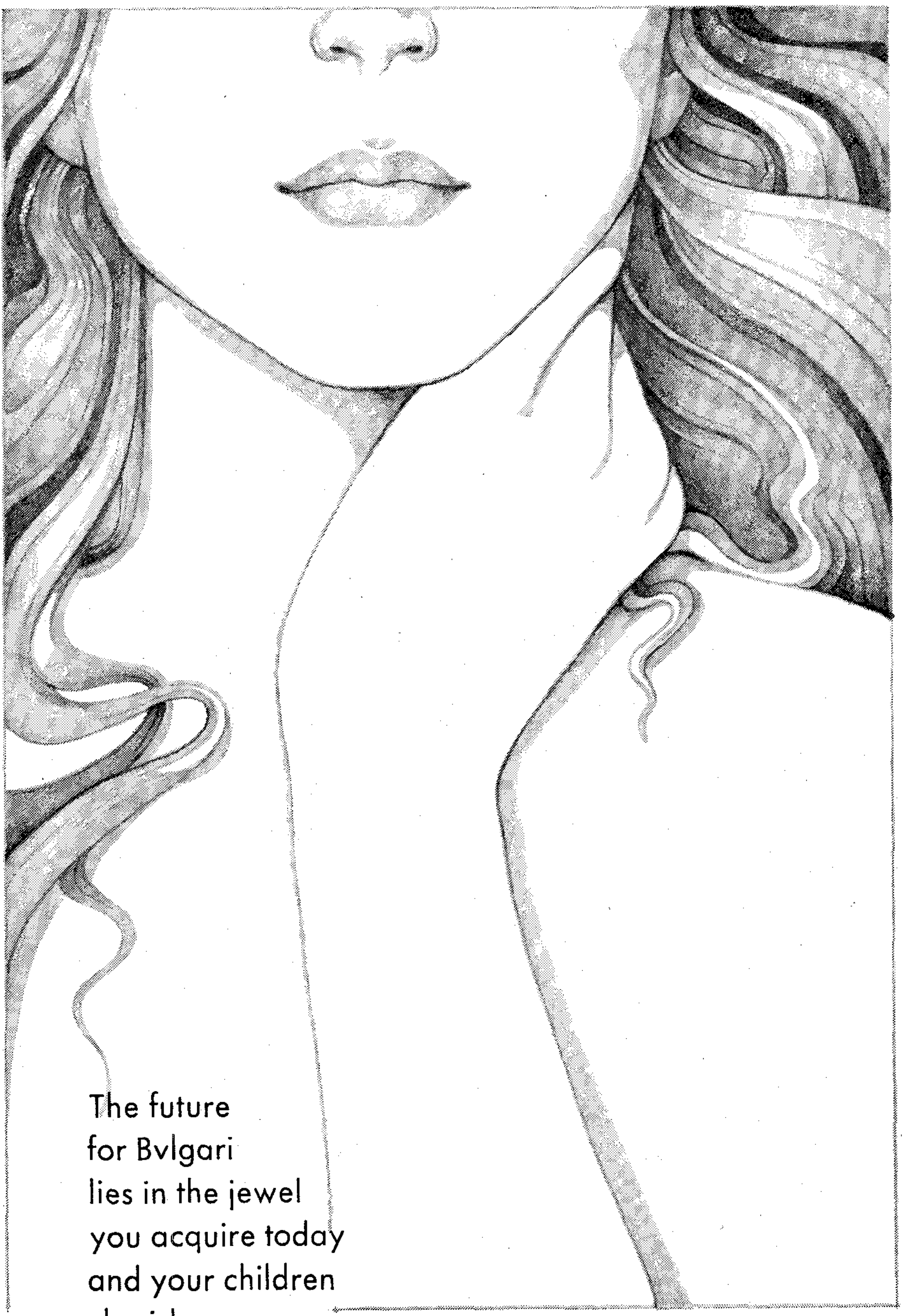

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

LISTENING to President Ford speak of America's commitment to South Vietnam last week left us with the impression that American policy in that part of the world had become something changeless and eternal—something that could never be influenced by mere human events—and we fancied that even after there was no more South Vietnam, ghostly Presidents of the future might still be maintaining America's commitment to that nation. The timeless quality of American policy may be one reason some words we came across recently that were written in 1954 seem as eloquent and as pertinent to our situation today as they were to the situation then. They are words spoken by George F. Kennan at Princeton University, in a series of four lectures on American foreign policy. (The lectures were later published by Princeton University Press as "Realities of American Foreign Policy.") Kennan had advice to offer both on what America should do in 1954 and on what it should not do. Some of the advice on what it should not do concerned our response to Communism in Asia. At the time, the French were within two months of their defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

"It is here, above all, that we must avoid the fallacy that we are dealing with some threat of military aggression comparable to that which faced the world when Hitler put his demands on the Poles in 1939," Kennan said. "Military aggression can never be ruled out entirely as a possibility, but it is not the most urgent and likely of the possibilities with which we have to reckon. We are dealing here in large measure with tendencies and states of mind which, however misguided and however befuddled by deceptions practiced from outside, are nevertheless basically the reflections of wholly real and even profound indigenous conditions, and would not be caused to disappear even in the unthinkable event that Moscow could be threatened or bludgeoned into telling them to do so. We are dealing here with great emotional forces, and not with rational reactions."

Kennan went on, "It seems to me evident . . . that in no area of our foreign policy will we be well served, in this coming period, by an approach directed strictly to countering the Soviet threat as a straight military problem. . . . Let us remember that the dominant characteristic of our present international situation is the passing of the phenomenon people have called 'bipolarity'—a state of affairs that marked the immediate post-hostilities period—and the rise to renewed vigor and importance of the so-called 'in-between' countries, particularly our recent enemies, but not only them. We are today in the midst of a transition from a simple to a complex international pattern. Yet many of us seem not to be aware of this. . . . A strictly military approach, which attempts to subordinate all other considerations to the balancing of the military equation, will be not only inadequate but downright harmful. For the demands placed on our policy by the rise of these in-between countries to positions of new vitality and importance will often be in direct conflict with the requirements of the perfect and total military posture; and any marked failure on our part to meet these new demands will only be capitalized on at once by the Communists within the respective countries; so that by a rigid military approach we will be in danger of losing on the political level more than we gain on the military one. We will be like the man whose exclusive preoccupation with barricading the front door has made it easy for his enemies to enter by the back door."

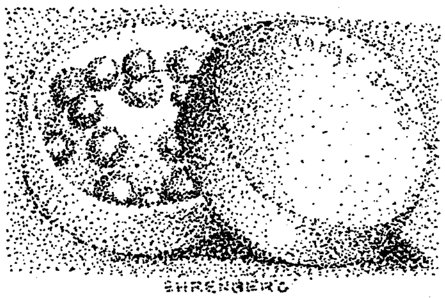
And Kennan said, "If there is any great lesson we Americans need to learn with regard to the methodology of foreign policy, it is that we must be gardeners and not mechanics in our approach to world affairs. We must come to think of the development of international life as an organic and not a mechanical process. We must realize that we did not create the forces by which this process operates. We must learn to take these forces for what they are and to induce them to work with us and for us by influencing the environmental stimuli to which they are subjected, but to do this gently and patiently, with understanding and sympathy, not trying to force growth by mechanical means, not tearing the plants up by the roots when they fail to behave as we wish them to. The forces of nature will generally be on the side of him who understands them best and respects them most scrupulously. We do not need to insist, as the Communists do, that change in the camp of *our* adversaries can come only by violence. Our concept of the possibility of improvement in the condition of mankind is not predicated, as is that of the Communists, on the employment of violence as a means to its realization. If our outlook on life is, as we believe it to be, more closely attuned to the real nature of man than that of our Communist adversaries, then we can afford to be patient and even occasionally to suffer reverses, placing our confidence in the longer and deeper workings of history."

In dealing with the Communist

movement, Kennan suggested, a degree of inattention could serve a purpose: "It may be said that the problem of world Communism is one of those problems which can be dealt with effectively only if you learn to look away from it, not in the sense that you take no precautionary measures with regard to it, but in the sense that you do not permit it to preoccupy your thoughts and your vision but rather insist on the right to proceed with your positive undertakings in spite of it. This is a quality not peculiar to Moscow's Communism. Only too often in life we find ourselves beset by demons, sometimes outside ourselves, sometimes within us, who have power over us only so long as they are able to monopolize our attention and lose that power when we refuse to permit ourselves to be diverted and intimidated by them and when we simply go on with the real work we know we have to do. Thus it is with Communism; and in this recognition lies, I believe, not only the key to the only successful method of dealing with that particular phenomenon but also the key to a successful global approach to our world problems generally, in this coming period."

When it came to recommending what America *should* do in its foreign policy, Kennan had suggestions that seemed, on the surface, to have more to do with domestic policy: "One of the things that I have in mind is the manner in which we treat our natural environment here on this North American territory. I think we can no longer permit the economic advance of our country to take place so extensively at the cost of the devastation of its natural resources and its natural beauty." (Said in 1954.) Another thing he worried about was "our dependence on other countries for materials vital to the functioning of our economy," and he advised "a conscious attempt to shape our relationships with other economies in all these matters in such a way that they have some stability and some firm foundation of mutual understanding and do not lead in the future to all sorts of crises and tensions and tragedies." It may seem odd that at the heart of a discussion of foreign policy he was recommending domestic policies, yet he had thought carefully about the problem of inward and outward strength, and one theme of his lectures was the danger that in our obsession with strength in the world we would undermine the foundation of our strength at home. And so in his discussion of American foreign policy he went on to remark, "I would like to say that the way things are proceeding at present produces on the surface of our national life a number of depressing and discreditable phenomena which are visible to the world at large and are genuinely important from the standpoint of our relationships with other peoples. Blighted areas, filthy streets, community demoralization, juvenile delinquency, chaotic traffic conditions, utter disregard for aesthetic and recreational values in urban development, and an obviously unsatisfactory geographic distribution of various facilities for homelife and work and recreation and shopping and worship: these things may not mark all our urban communities in conspicuous degree, but they mark enough of them to put a definite imprint on the image of our life that is carried to the world around us, and this is an imprint that leads others to feel that we are not really the masters of our own fate, that our society is not really under control, that we are being helplessly carried along by forces we do not have the courage or the vitality to master."

Kennan was telling Americans of 1954 that although adequate military forces were one necessary expression of our strength, what we made of ourselves at home was the very source of our strength, and he was warning that a rigid obsession with countering external threats by force of arms would, over the long run, leave us debilitated. On the other hand, if we kept the better part of our attention trained on the quality of life in America our position in the world would be strengthened. He said, "Now this problem of the adjustment of man to his natural resources, and the problem of how such things as industrialization and urbanization can be accepted without destroying the traditional values of a civilization and corrupting the inner vitality of its life—these things are not only the problems of America; they are the problems of men everywhere. To the extent that we Americans become able to show that we are aware of these problems, and that we are approaching them with coherent and effective ideas of our own which we have the courage to put into effect in our own lives, to that extent a new dimension will come into our relations with the peoples beyond our borders, to that extent, in fact, the dreams of these earlier generations of Americans who saw us as leaders and helpers to the peoples of the world at large will begin to take on flesh and reality."



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WALKER EVANS, the great American photographer, died last week. He was seventy-one. By the time he was in his early thirties, he had changed the way generations of people would perceive the world. His photographs were sublimely simple, resonant, and profound, with that mystical repose of superlative art. We were lucky to get to know him a bit toward the end of his life. He was a slight man—elegant, jaunty, charming, fastidious, funny, enthusiastic, and rather grand. He was thin as a stick, and stitched and patched, but bristling with vigor and curiosity. (What had we seen? What did we think? Where was So-and-So? What was next?) He was part mystic, part dandy. It was his nature to dislike excess (his pictures, after all, had proved there was no need: a superb artist could get things just right, with nothing left over), and he was impatient with jargon and fancy talk. In honoring his memory, we feel a restraint—indeed, the presence of Evans himself, that singular man, peering over his glasses and muttering, Oh, nonsense, come on now. The *Times* obituary said, "Mr. Evans left no survivors," but this is true in only the strictest sense. His pictures survive, and beyond that are all the people whose eyes were opened by the dazzling revelations of his extraordinary art; they are, and will be, innumerable. He is remembered; he is missed. He might permit us to say that.

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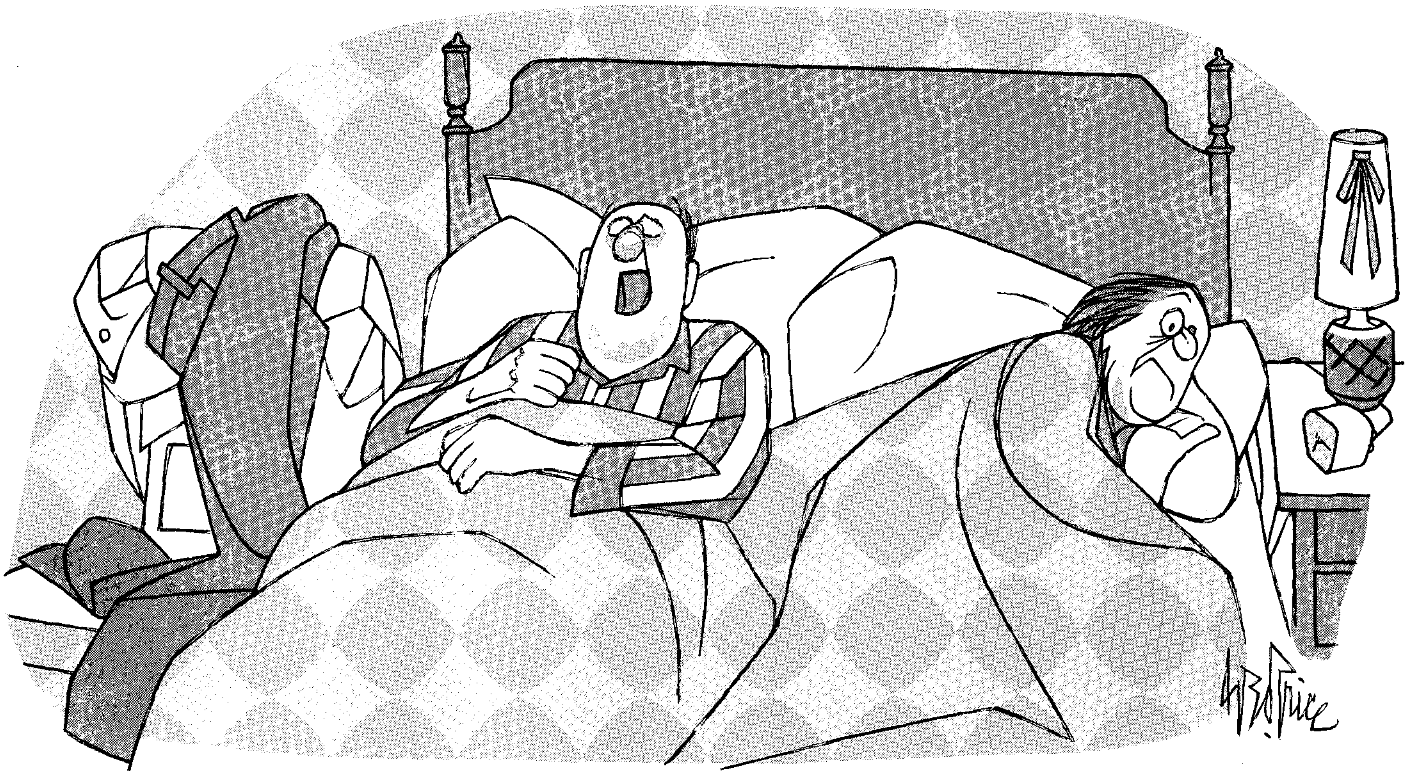
Patience, Affection, Attention, and Meat

FOR a year now, Gunther Gebel-Williams, the greatest animal trainer in the world, and probably ever, has been working with leopards, the most dangerous of the big cats. It will be another year before the act—the first leopard act to be seen in the United States since 1939—can be presented to the public. Last week, Gunther invited us to watch him rehearse—and see what no one outside the circus had been allowed to see before. It is 5:45 P.M. in Madison Square Garden. The



"Let's go, Mets!"

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matinée performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has been over only about fifteen minutes. The houselights are up, the cleaning women are singing "Never on Sunday," the lions are roaring over their food backstage, and in the center ring, which is surrounded by a steel-mesh cage fifteen feet high, Gunther and his assistant Henry Schroer are guiding a seven-year-old circus horse into a gentle canter. The horse's back, neck, and sides are protected by a heavy leather shield that looks like medieval armor.

Outside the ring: five spotted leopards and one panther, or black leopard, in three small cages; a half-dozen roustabouts; one clown, without make-up, standing on one foot and juggling three Indian clubs; and us. Gunther enters the first cage, pets Blackie, the panther, talks to him, and, all in one movement, slips a collar around his neck and attaches a long, flat leather leash to the collar. The first trick being practiced is panther on horseback. A hippie roustabout handles the horse, which tends to shy at the sight of a predator. Henry Schroer, shirtless, puts cubes of red meat on the horse's back.

Gunther Gebel-Williams has on a white T-shirt, light-brown corduroys, and black canvas shoes. Handsome, sinewy, his blond hair combed straight back, he moves with a kind of attention and agility very seldom found in human beings. "Come, Schatzi!" Blackie bounces to the back of Apache, the aging equus, posts on all fours as Apache trots halfway round the ring, then vaults down to eat a piece of meat Henry has put on the ground. By this time, Apache is around on the other side of the ring again, and Blackie pops back up top. "Good dog!" says Gunther affably. "*Wülli, wülli, wülli.*"

Gunther talks to his animals in English, French, German (when he's angry), and Baby Leopard. He also speaks fluent Elephant, several dialects of Tiger, and Circus Horse. He joined a German circus right after the war, at the age of twelve; graduated to a French circus; and was generally considered the best animal trainer in Europe (at least, every other animal trainer in Europe copied his tricks) when, in 1969, Irvin Feld, the man who owns Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, bought an entire circus to get Gunther's act: tigers on elephant back; elephants on teeterboards; elephants, tigers, horses, and men working together—ticklish stuff, because in the wilds tigers consume many baby elephants. Gunther started working with horses, then went on to elephants, and then to tigers. He now works with more tigers than anyone else—seventeen this year, twenty next year. He got into leopards last year because they are new and different and exciting and intractable. You can't trust leopards. It's not that they're treacherous—it's just that they're leopards. They're too fast and they love to jump. Gunther owns thirteen pards at the moment and is looking to acquire a couple more. "Fifteen is the optimum number," he says. "Otherwise, from the balcony it looks like nothing—just a few tabby cats."

Blackie belongs to the advanced leopard class—animals that already have all learned how to sit on a perch and not come down. They are working on sitting on their hind legs and then leaping twenty feet in midair. The leaps are spectacular—all muscle and grace. Sitting training consists of sitting on your haunches and putting your front paws on a two-by-four suspended three feet off the ground between two aluminum platforms. It is a difficult exercise. The leopards, when they are lined up, like to whop each other. At some later date, Gunther will get them to walk across the two-by-four as tightrope training. He doesn't know what they can do, and they don't know what they can do, and he's willing to try anything.

David Daniels, an artist friend of ours from Boston, reports that his black house cat, Hafiz, used to look from a wall switch to a ceiling light and then back to the wall switch. "I flipped the light on and off to help him out, and, once, he seemed just about to get the connection when he closed his eyes and collapsed. He had used up every ounce of mental energy."

Gunther reports considerable differences among leopards in learning ability. When they're angry, you can get them to do lots of things. When they're full of food or have an affectionate disposition, they just don't care. There are several don't-care leopards in Gunther's beginner class—the "green" leopards, he calls them. Blackie, the advanced panther, is a devil. "A fantastic animal," Gunther says. "He's like a clown. Does everything ten times or won't do anything at all." Today is a won't-do day. Blackie doesn't want to leap. He jumps up onto an aluminum launching platform, then hops down onto the ground and up onto the landing platform. Cute. Then he won't go back in his cage. "*Allez!*" says Gunther. No dice. Gunther pets him, cuffs him, opens his mouth, scratches his muzzle, then picks him up around the middle and tosses him back into his cage, pets him again, and gives him a piece of meat.

Gunther has to drag several green leopards around by the tail, because they just go limp and start acting like babies and try and crawl back in the cage. Inertia is their strategy. It's their first day of learning to sit on high perches, and only two will ascend. Gunther leaps up onto the high perch and pets them. Nearby, in the next ring, the clown without makeup is practicing backward somersaults on the high wire. No net and no audience. Guess that's what you call a trade-off. Gunther's tigers eat a hundred thousand pounds of meat a year.

After work, Gunther grants us an interview. "Let's go! Ten minutes, eh?"

We ask him if he uses fear and anger in training animals.

"No. Just gets them nervous. Then they can't do anything except jump through rings of fire. I pull the leopards' tails because they take that to be a sign of affection. They're so tough you can push them without hurting them. After a year, I learn it's the only way to do it. You can't say only '*Wülli, wülli, wülli*' to a leopard. Not like tigers. Tigers are sensitive." Gunther uses instead, he says, patience, affection, attention, and meat. He has slash marks all over his wrists and forearms, but they're from breaking up fights. He spends most of the day with his animals, feeding them and cleaning them. "I say, 'Hello, I'm here. *Wülli, wülli.*' " And he spends only a relatively short time training the animals in the ring. He has never been attacked by an animal.

"Do they think you're God?" we asked.

"I hope."

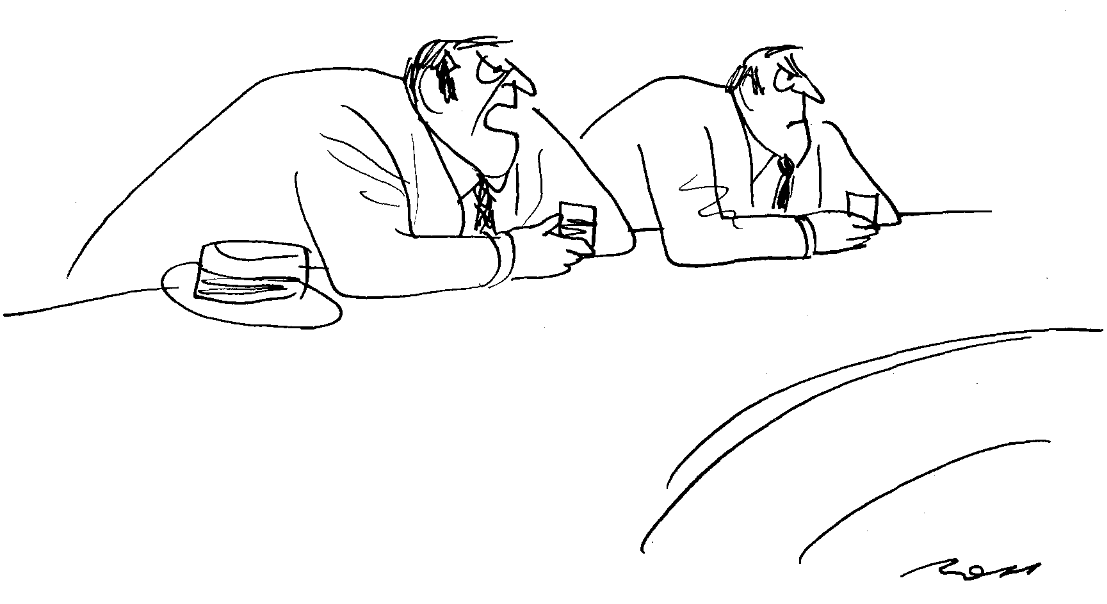
Education

ONE day last week, as the baseball season was getting under way, the six-year-old son of a woman we know delivered his spelling homework—an original sentence using the word "cap"—to his first-grade teacher. It read, "catfish hunter wears a cap." The teacher returned the sentence to him with the following correction: "*A* catfish hunter wears a cap."

Around the World in 641 Days

By ERNEST M. FRIMBO
Special to The New Yorker

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, FIRST CITY IN THE FIRST STATE, APRIL 1—The melodious sound of the whistle of a giant old Reading Railroad steam engine No. 2101 lofts over Delaware Park, the classy little race track outside Wilmington, signalling, with a sound so different from the peremptory bark of a diesel horn, that the American Freedom Train, the most imaginative Bicentennial project in the country, is off and running on its seventeen-thousand-mile, twenty-one-month trek across the rails of America, across miles of track that haven't seen or heard a passenger train since E. M. Frimbo was a sprig. Let Freedom Whistle! The man in the cab of the Reading T-1, sounding the whistle with gay abandon, is Ross E. Rowland, Jr., rail buff *extraordinaire*, the man whose persistence in the face of what even I thought were insurmountable odds is responsible for the fact that there is an American Freedom Train today. Ross Rowland is the lad who rescued from oblivion the extraordinarily good-looking engine he sits in, who snapped up the ten exhibit cars of the train—baggage cars that once belonged to the New York Central. He also snapped up the T-1. Readers may remember Ross Rowland from the account that was published here of his steam-train excursion through the Alleghenies, when he took



"It's about time Paul Newman was fifty years old!"

a steam engine and a full load of heavy old passenger cars up the steeply graded, magnificent Horseshoe Curve outside Altoona, despite the flat assertion of every Penn Central official within miles that the locomotive was a little-engine-that-couldn't. And they say that rail buffs are useless people!

Today is Dedication Day for the Freedom Train, an occasion graced by the presence of Delaware Governor Sherman W. Tribbitt; the Delaware Regiment of the Delaware National Guard, in its handsome and functional Colonial uniforms; the 324th United States Army Matériel Command Band, from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland (Chief Warrant Officer Louis Wells, Sr., bandmaster and commanding officer); Colonial Dames by the score; local schoolchildren by the thousand, tickets by courtesy of du Pont; and perfect Bicentennial weather—what they call down here "Delmarvalous weather," referring to the Delaware-Maryland-Virginia peninsula, on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay. The band has two girl clarinettists and two girl piccoloists. Sergeant Major Curtis Lord, of the Delaware Regiment, showed me his cap, which has a tall, peaked steel visor, and I'll warrant you didn't know, as I didn't, that the visor has that shape so it can double as an entrenching tool. Delmarva ingenuity!

The American Freedom Train will consist of twenty-five cars: the four cars of the Preamble Express, chronicled in an earlier piece; a sleeping car for the eighteen lucky attendants; the exhibit cars; and a set of maintenance cars. Two of the cars are showcase cars—open-air, in a way, by which I mean that they have been rigged up so that everything inside can be seen from outside as the train trundles slowly through tiny towns. A glorious menagerie in these cars: a model of The Arabian, a tiny American passenger locomotive that dates from 1834; a mockup of a Lunar Rover; a terrific old horse-drawn fire engine. The other exhibit cars are the work of Barry and Emelie Howard, husband and wife from Larchmont, and these cars will be on view when the train is halted in small towns and major centers of population. Where they will be jammed by expectant crowds. My fellow-Americans, it will be worth the wait! This exhibit is tiptop. It is NOT insipid. It is NOT sickmaking. Silent conveyor belts whisk you past the best of the last two hundred years while a clever little stick you hold up to one ear fills you in on the sounds. An exhilarating journey. Bob Lanier's size-20 sneakers, Jack Benny's violin and bow, bakers baking bread, Jack Levine's "The Pensionnaire" (painted in 1945), pages from Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," a moon rock, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, Dream, George Washington's copy of the Constitution, the first Polaroid camera, Mendy Rudolph's N.B.A. referee shirt (No. 5) and whistle, Rembrandt Peale's "George Washington," the Duke's "A Train," Fred Astaire dancing, Lincoln's stovepipe hat, a Wham-O hula hoop. Objects, movies, slides, stills, paintings—all cunningly arranged and displayed. Most amazing of all are models that look like real people—mannequins with movies of real faces talking projected onto their faces. I don't know how the Howards thought this one up, but there's not a bit of the pasty old waxworks ambience about these exhibits. A glimpse of a thousand good things. I think this will be the hit show of 1975.

One of the dedication speeches contained the sentence "We will never again go to war without the consent of the American people." This amazed me so much that I wrote it down. The next two hundred years are off to a good start. And there are honest-to-God rail buffs all over the place here; one is a CBS cameraman who is filming footage for what he calls "the Cronks," which I take to be the "CBS Evening News," and who has been asking me questions about narrow-gauge steam engines in the Republic of Ireland. I even have hopes for Governor Tribbitt, who I noticed was wearing one of Henny Youngman's brother's "dimeand" pins in his lapel. The Governor did not run away when I told him he should restore passenger service to Dover, the nice little capital city of his state. The gimmick of the day—which I skipped in favor of two helpings of pink-white-and-blue cotton candy—was listening to Governor Tribbitt make a conference call to the governors of what the press releases call "the 48 contiguous states."

Sergeant Major Lord tells me that the Governor is "a Southerner," which means anybody from south of Wilmington. I listened to the Governor's lady talking for some minutes to some of her South Delaware friends, and they *were* talking Southern. I could pick up only a few words like "Wilmington" and "United States." Then the Governor came back from his phone call and said, "Did you hear me talking to George? I said, 'Well, hello there, George!' George Wallace. He called me up."

Another point of interest is the General Motors Corporation, which has helped finance the Freedom Train to the tune of a cool million, despite the fact that, barring a calamity, knock on wood, the train will not be hauled a single mile by a G.M. diesel.

As for Ross Rowland, he will say only that he is "ecstatic and proud." He has been working on this project for six years, and he has brought it off. Rail buff that he is, he'll probably be in the cab of his engine the whole seventeen thousand miles.

SY PRINGLE'S PIE-IN-THE-SKY AND OTHER HEAVY NOTES

(AFTER A RECENT COLLISION WITH "ROLLING STONE")

Scrambled Eggs: **Quentin Giles,** keyboard man for Yoke, is reported holed up in London after abruptly dropping out during the group's Middle and Far Eastern tour. Details are sketchy. Giles, long feuding with manager Sid Slater, apparently wasn't up to snuff for a private palace concert in Abu Dhabi. ("I've lost that lovin' feelin'," he told friends.) The rift came to a head when Giles stood the group up, no-showing a sparsely attended benefit gig in Dacca. In fact, he was already en route home, where he tried to sneak past the Heathrow customs boys disguised as a refugee. His cover was blown when he went to claim his baggage, including his Farfisa and amps. No explanation for the incident. Meanwhile, Giles is doing nothing to discourage rumors he'll now go it on his own. He's label-hunting.

•

Slim Winsome, formerly R. & B. bassist with Oscillating Bluebird before the group broke up last spring following **Bruce Fong's** onstage tantrum at the Felt Forum during the long version of *Pass the Ketchup*, has been reincarnated with what he calls a "combination Nashville/barrio sound," and is recording under the name **Pitchfork Lopez.** He just spent six weeks in L.A. laying down the tracks for eight new cuts on an as yet untitled album, including a twenty-minute arrangement, with electric-flute solo, of the New Mexico Military Institute fight song. "More barrio than Nashville on that one," quipped Winsome/Lopez.

•

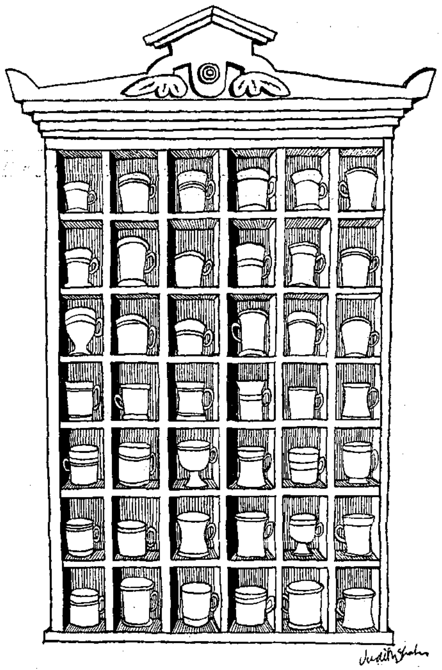
The police lines were up around the Sherry-Netherland March 20th when three hundred 'luded-out well-wishers gathered to celebrate **Biff Bosco's** thirtieth birthday. Hotel security people gamely removed all furniture before things got too rowdy but were a bit slow putting the damper on several trash fires. No injuries. Glitter-boy **Jackie Blazer** was there with his entourage, including new lady-friend China Noodle, who came dressed in an eye-catching fourteen-foot anaconda. "Domesticated," she assured squeamish revellers. Music by English Muffin, the new Yugoslav group, with **Ivory Schwartz, Beebop Danielson,** and **Mel Treaster** jamming between sets. Guest of honor Bosco, still bedded down with acute guitar nipple, was unable to attend.

•

Margo Strange, guiding spirit of Lemon Towtruck, held a stomping, clapping crowd on its feet for an hour despite a steady downpour at the Prince Edward Island Arts Festival last week. Strutting in double time and sweating through an alligator-lamé jumpsuit with built-in Plexiglas guitar, Margo boogied through a throaty arrangement of *Sour-Cream Polka*, then down-shifted into her bluesy new single, *Socket-Wrench Lullaby*. She retreated only after high winds began to shred the plastic overhang that had been keeping the stage dry. It was a gutsy performance, fans agreed, recalling Margo's near-rendezvous with Rock 'n Roll Heaven last September, when another jumpsuit-cum-guitar short-circuited during an impromptu hailstorm in Louisville.

•

The liaison between folk lyricist **Stella Gertz** and collaborator **Shep Lifschultz** has borne bountiful fruit—twins, a boy and a girl. The proud parents ran into a hassle trying to decide on names, discarding what Stella calls "several lowercase but rather pretentious options" before settling on Bill and Bill. "We toyed with 'minneapolis' and 'saint paul,' and also 'new york' and 'boston,' " says Shep, "but it really isn't fair to make a kid truck around a lot of heavy identity baggage all his life."



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Stacks of Wax: Image overhaul due for Walpurgis Pajamas, as **Rennie Ortenburger** and **Dwayne Frumkin** have left to devote their time to fund-raising for brain-transplant research. Remaining group members, still casting about for a new name, say they'll abandon their current onstage pyrotechnics (almost surely slated for oblivion: the exploding-bass-drum and Roman-candle-microphone routines), and are looking for "something more tactile." Says leader **Sherm Watkins:** "Lately, I've been getting into incendiary long-chain polymers. We'll see what happens.". . . The deportation flap continues for Bratwurst Special lead guitarist **Willy von Freihofer,** convicted last month of attempting to smuggle stolen animals out of the country on a vacation hop back home to Germany. Von Freihofer has steadfastly claimed that he doesn't know who put three baby Gila monsters and a chloroformed whooping crane in his shaving kit. His lawyers are working on an appeal. . . . Philly deejay **Vince Romaldo,** frequently seen dancing with his girlfriend (now ex-wife) Tina on several of the early "American Bandstand" shows, reports he's writing an autobiography/memoir of the "Bandstand" salad days. Asked to describe his prose, Romaldo said, "It's got a good beat."

•

Jailhouse Rock: Not long ago, the word went out that **Joe Bob Slinkard** and his Tennessee Troubadours were planning a concert tour of several prisons to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Joe Bob's release from Leavenworth. That all appears to be off for the time being, as Slinkard, who pleaded guilty recently to charges he held up a Miami Beach furrier, has waived a probation offer and decided to do one-to-five at Sumter Correctional Institution, in Bushnell, Fla. "Tell the truth," says Joe Bob, "I have *no* serious interest in a life of crime. It's just that I always felt more at home in the pokey. Both my gold albums came from songs I wrote at Leavenworth and Chino. I figure a few months down at Sumter should get me back in the groove."

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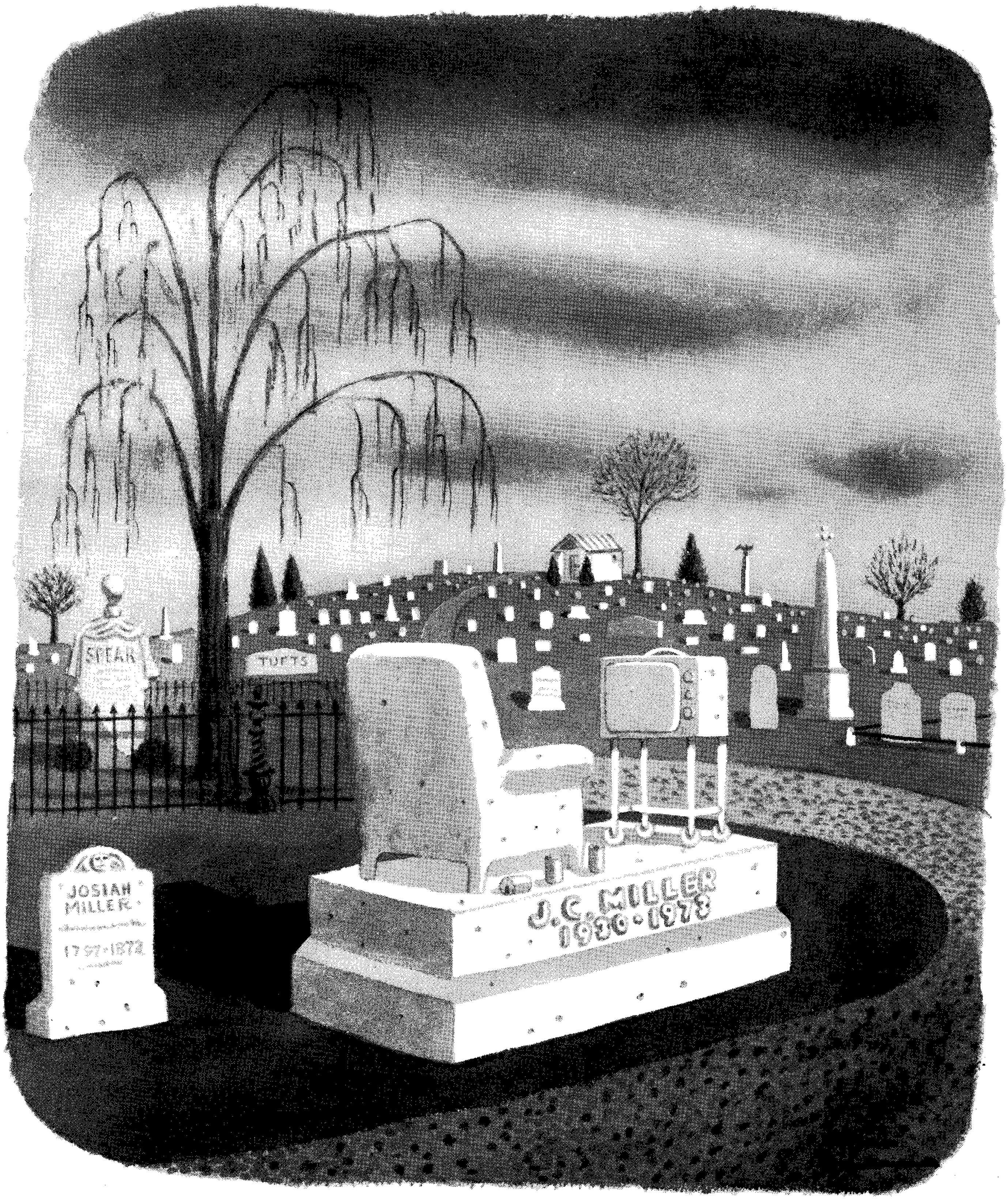
Sy's Pie-in-the-Sky: Promoter **Sy Pringle,** moxie-man behind last Labor



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Day's successful "First Annual Buddy Holly Memorial Pie-Bake and Eat-Off" in Lubbock, Texas, now acknowledges that he's trying to put together a "Fourth of July Weekend Special Daredevil Act/Newport Jazz Festival Home-Turf Revival." He has apparently inked a preliminary O.K. with jet-skycyclist **Skids Monroe,** who is eager to try to jump Narragansett Bay, leaving from a ramp in Pawtucket and landing in Newport. "What I'd like," Pringle explains, "is to rent the bay for a day and, if we can skirt the environmental issue, perhaps lay down a flaming oil slick along the path of Skids' trajectory, just to add an extra margin of risk. It should be socko." Less certain is whether Pringle has the clout to bring the exiled Jazz Festival back to Newport; he hopes to sign on "several big-name groups" to add punch to his promo. "There is no way," says Sy, "that I can possibly overemphasize the word *big name*."

—MARK SINGER

VERMONT

NOEL is in our living room, shaking his head. He refused my offer and then David's offer of a drink, but has had three glasses of water. It is absurd to wonder at such a time when he will get up to go to the bathroom, but I do. I would like to see Noel move; he seems so rigid that I forget to sympathize, forget that he is a real person. "That's not what I want," he said to David when David began sympathizing. Absurd, at such a time, to ask what he does want. I can't remember how it came about that David started bringing glasses of water.

Noel's wife, Susan, has told him that she's been seeing John Stillerman. We live on the first floor, Noel and Susan on the second, John on the eleventh. Interesting that John, on the eleventh, should steal Susan from the second floor. John proposes that they just rearrange—that Susan move up to the eleventh, into the apartment John's wife only recently left, that they just . . . John's wife had a mastectomy last fall, and in the elevator she told Susan that if she was losing what she didn't want to lose, she might as well lose what she did want to lose. She lost John—left him the way popcorn flies out of the bag on the roller coaster. She is living somewhere in the city, but John doesn't know where. John is a museum curator, and last month, after John's picture appeared in a newsmagazine, showing him standing in front of an empty space where a stolen canvas had hung, he got a one-word note from his wife: "Good." He showed the note to David in the elevator. "It was tucked in the back of his wallet—the way all my friends used to carry rubbers in high school," David told me.

"Did you guys know?" Noel asks now. A difficult one; of course we didn't *know*, but naturally we guessed. Is Noel able to handle such semantics? David answers vaguely. Noel shakes his head vaguely, accepting David's vague answer. What else will he accept? The move upstairs? For now, another glass of water.

David gives Noel a sweater, hoping, no doubt, to stop his shivering. Noel pulls on the sweater over pajamas patterned with small gray fish. David brings him a raincoat, too. A long white scarf hangs from the pocket. Noel swishes it back and forth listlessly. He gets up and goes to the bathroom.

"Why did she have to tell him when he was in his pajamas?" David whispers.

Noel comes back, looks out the window. "I don't know why I didn't know. I can tell you guys knew."

Noel goes to our front door, opens it, and wanders off down the hallway.

"If he had stayed any longer, he would have said 'Jeepers,'" David says.

David looks at his watch and sighs. Usually he opens Beth's door on his way to bed, and tiptoes in to admire her. Beth is our daughter. She is five. Some nights, David even leaves a note in her slippers, saying that he loves her. But tonight he's depressed. I follow him into the bedroom, undress, and get into bed. David looks at me sadly, lies down next to me, turns off the light. I want to say something but don't know what to say. I could say, "One of us should have gone with Noel. Do you know your socks are still on? You're going to do to me what Susan did to Noel, aren't you?"

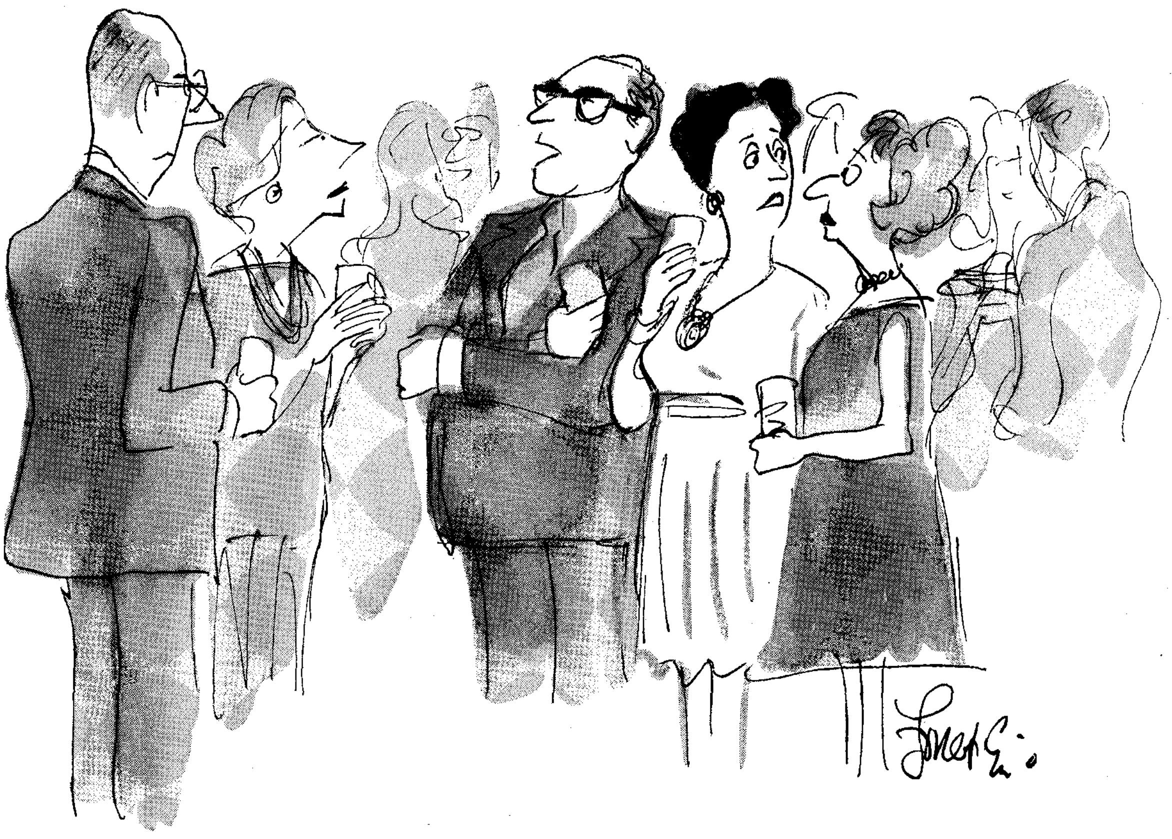
"Did you see his poor miserable pajamas?" David whispers finally. He throws back the covers and gets up and goes back to the living room. I follow, half asleep. David sits in the chair, puts his arms on the armrests, presses his neck against the back of the chair, and moves his feet together. "Zzzz," he says, and his head falls forward.

BACK in bed, I lie awake, remembering a day David and I spent in the Park last August. David was sitting on the swing next to me, scraping the toes of his tennis shoes in the loose dirt.

"Don't you want to swing?" I said. We had been playing tennis. He had beaten me every game. He always beats me at everything—precision parking, three-dimensional ticktacktoe, soufflés. His soufflés rise as beautifully curved as the moon.

"I don't know how to swing," he said.

I tried to teach him, but he couldn't get his legs to move right. He stood the way I told him, with the board against his behind, gave a little jump to get on, but then he couldn't synchronize his legs. "Pump!" I called, but it didn't mean anything. I might as well have said "Juggle dishes." I still find it



"He either thinks faster than he talks or talks faster than he thinks. But, whichever it is, I never understand a word he says."

"That was a sensitive, moving lunch."

• •

hard to believe there's anything I can do that he can't do.

He got off the swing. "Why do you act like everything is a goddam contest?" he said, and walked away.

"Because we're always having contests and you always win!" I shouted.

He kept on walking. "Look at me swing!" I hollered.

I was still waiting by the swings when he showed up half an hour later.

"Do you consider it a contest when we go scuba diving?" he said.

He had me. It was stupid of me last summer to say how he always snatched the best shells, even when they were closer to me. That made him laugh. He had chased me into a corner, then laughed at me.

I lie in bed now, hating him for that. But don't leave me, I think—don't do what Noel's wife did. I reach across the bed and gently take hold of a little wrinkle in his pajama top. I don't know if I want to yank his pajamas—do something violent—or smooth them. Confused, I take my hand away and turn on the light. David rolls over, throws his arm over his face, groans. I stare at him. In a second he will lower his arm and demand an explanation. Trapped again. I get up and put on my slippers.

"I'm going to get a drink of water," I whisper apologetically.

LATER in the month, it happens. I'm sitting on a cushion on the floor, with newspapers spread in front of me, repotting plants. I'm just moving the purple passion plant to a larger pot when David comes in. It is late in the afternoon—late enough to be dark outside. David has been out with Beth. Before the two of them went out, Beth, confused by the sight of soil indoors, crouched down beside me to ask, "Are there ants, Mommy?" I laughed. David never approved of my laughing at her. Later, that will be something he'll mention in court, hoping to get custody: I laugh at her. And when that doesn't work he'll tell the judge what I said about his snatching all the best seashells.

David comes in, coat still buttoned, blue silk scarf still tied (a Christmas present from Noel, with many apologies for losing the white one), sits on the floor, and says that he's decided to leave. He is speaking very reasonably and quietly. That alarms me. It crosses my mind that he's mad. And Beth isn't with him. He has killed her!

No, no, of course not. I'm mad. Beth is upstairs in her friend's apartment. He ran into Beth's friend and her mother coming into the building. He asked if Beth could stay in their apartment for a few minutes. I'm not convinced: What friend? I'm foolish to feel reassured as soon as he names one—Louisa. I feel nothing but relief. It might be more accurate to say that I feel nothing. I would have felt pain if she were dead, but David says she isn't, so I feel nothing. I reach out and begin stroking the plant's leaves. Soft leaves, sharp points. The plant I'm repotting is a cutting from Noel's big plant that hangs in a silver ice bucket in his window (a wedding gift that he and Susan had never used). I helped him put it in the ice bucket. "What are you going to do with the top?" I asked. He put it on his head and danced around.

"I had an uncle who got drunk and danced with a lampshade on his head," Noel said. "That's an old joke, but how many people have actually *seen* a man dance with a lampshade on his head? My uncle did it every New Year's Eve."

"What the hell are you smiling about?" David says. "Are you listening to me?"

I nod and start to cry. It will be a long time before I realize that David makes me sad and Noel makes me happy.

NOEL sympathizes with me. He tells me that David is a fool; he is better off without Susan, and I will be better off without David. Noel calls or visits me in my new apartment almost every night. Last night, he suggested that I get a babysitter for tonight, so he could take me to dinner. He tries very hard to make me happy. He brings expensive wine when we eat in my apartment and offers to buy it in restaurants when we eat out. Beth prefers it when we eat in; that way, she can have both Noel and the toy that Noel inevitably brings. Her favorite toy, so far, is a handsome red tugboat pulling three barges, attached to one another by string. Noel bends over, almost doubled in half, to move them across the rug, whistling and calling orders to the imaginary crew. He does not just bring gifts to Beth and me. He has bought himself a new car, and pretends that this is for Beth and me. ("Comfortable seats?" he asks me. "That's a nice big window back there to wave out of," he says to Beth.) It is silly to pretend that he got

AT THE BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

Another spring at the Garden, and how
Foolish to find myself heavy-hearted
On a day as sunny as this. Well,
The white cherries left me in a stupor,
As they always do. Let it go at that.

From a vender at the gate I've taken
A carton of childish, leather-tough
Popcorn, which winces saltily against
My teeth. Years since I've eaten any. . . .
Spring, like Christmas, is for children, maybe.

It belongs to the toddler just behind me,
Bobbing along under a pink balloon.
He's dribbling corn from a carton striped blue
Like mine. How much can he weigh, this tiny
Dollop of flesh? And how can the mere

Earth support one whose weight just suffices
To anchor a pink balloon? Heaviness,
Lightness, it's confused in my head, along
With blossoms, popcorn, the salts of childhood. . . .
I'm going to take a picture of *that* kid.

—ALFRED CORN

• •

the car for the three of us. And if he did, why was he too cheap to have a radio installed, when he knows I love music? Not only that but he's bowlegged. I am ashamed of myself for thinking bad things about Noel. He tries so hard to keep us cheerful. He can't help the odd angle of his thighs. Feeling sorry for him, I decided that a cheap dinner was good enough for tonight. I said that I wanted to go to a Chinese restaurant.

At the restaurant, I eat shrimp in black-bean sauce and drink a Heineken's and think that I've never tasted anything so delicious. The waiter brings two fortune cookies. We open them; the fortunes make no sense. Noel summons the waiter for the bill. With it come more fortune cookies—four this time. They are no good, either: talk of travel and money. Noel says, "What bloody rot." He is wearing a gray vest and a white shirt. I peek around the table without his noticing and see that he's wearing gray wool slacks. Lately it has been very important for me to be able to see *everything*. Whenever Noel pulls the boats out of sight, into another room, I move as quickly as Beth to watch what's going on.

Standing behind Noel at the cash register, I see that it has started to rain—a mixture of rain and snow.

"You know how you can tell a Chinese restaurant from any other?" Noel asks, pushing open the door. "Even when it's raining, the cats still run for the street."

I shake my head in disgust.

Noel stretches the skin at the corners of his eyes. "Sorry for honorable joke," he says.

We run for the car. He grabs the belt of my coat, catches me, and half lifts me with one arm, running along with me dangling at his side, giggling. Our wool coats stink. He opens my car door, runs around, and pulls his open. He's done it again; he has made me laugh.

We start home.

We are in heavy traffic, and Noel drives very slowly, protecting his new car.

"How old are you?" I ask.

"Thirty-six," Noel says.

"I'm twenty-seven," I say.

"So what?" he says. He says it pleasantly.

"I just didn't know how old you were."

"Mentally, I'm neck and neck with Beth," he says.

I'm soaking wet, and I want to get home to put on dry clothes. I look at him inching through traffic, and I remember the way his face looked that night he sat in the living room with David and me.

"Rain always puts you in a bad mood, doesn't it?" he says. He turns the windshield wipers on high. Rubber squeaks against glass.

"I see myself dead in it," I say.

"You see yourself dead in it?"

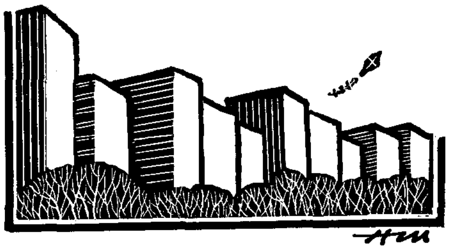
Noel does not read novels. He reads *Moneysworth*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*. I reprimand myself; there must be fitting ironies in the *Wall Street Journal*.

"Are you kidding?" Noel says. "You seemed to be enjoying yourself at dinner. It was a good dinner, wasn't it?"

"I make you nervous, don't I?" I say.

"No. You don't make me nervous."

Rain splashes under the car, drums on the roof. We ride on for blocks and blocks. It is too quiet; I wish there were a radio. The rain on the roof is monotonous, the collar of my coat is wet and cold. At last we are home. Noel parks the car and comes around to my door and opens it. I get out. Noel pulls me close, squeezes me hard. When I was a little girl, I once squeezed a doll to my chest in an antique shop, and when I took it away the eyes had popped off. An unpleasant memory. With my arms around Noel, I feel the cold rain hitting my hands and wrists.



A man running down the sidewalk with a small dog in his arms and a big black umbrella over him calls, "Your lights are on!"

IT is almost a year later—Christmas—and we are visiting Noel's crazy sister, Juliette. After going with Noel for so long, I am considered one of the family. Juliette phones before every occasion, saying, "You're one of the family. Of course you don't need an invitation." I should appreciate it, but she's always drunk when she calls, and usually she starts to cry and says that she wishes Christmas and Thanksgiving didn't exist. Jeanette, his other sister, is very nice, but she lives in Colorado. Juliette lives in New Jersey. Here we are in Bayonne, New Jersey, coming in through the front door—Noel holding Beth, me carrying a pumpkin pie. I tried to sniff the pie aroma on the way from Noel's apartment to his sister's house, but it had no smell. Or else I'm getting another cold. I sucked chewable Vitamin C tablets in the car, and now I smell of oranges. Noel's mother is in the living room, crocheting. Better, at least, than David's mother, who was always discoursing about Andrew Wyeth. I remember with satisfaction that the last time I saw her I said, "It's a simple fact that Edward Hopper was better."

“Go to bed, Osgood! You’ve had enough!”

• •

Juliette: long, whitish-blond hair tucked in back of her pink ears, spike-heel shoes that she orders from Frederick’s of Hollywood, dresses that show her cleavage. Noel and I are silently wondering if her husband will be here. At Thanksgiving, he showed up just as we were starting dinner, with a black-haired woman who wore a dress with a plunging neckline. Juliette’s breasts faced the black-haired woman’s breasts across the table (tablecloth crocheted by Noel’s mother). Noel doesn’t like me to criticize Juliette. He thinks positively. His other sister is a musician. She has a husband and a Weimaraner and two rare birds that live in a birdcage built by her husband. They have a lot of money and they ski. They have adopted a Korean boy. Once, they showed us a film of the Korean boy learning to ski. Wham, wham, wham—every few seconds, he was groveling in the snow again.

Juliette is such a liberal that she gives us not only the same bedroom but a bedroom with only a single bed in it. Beth sleeps on the couch.

Wedged beside Noel that night, I say, “This is ridiculous.”

“She means to be nice,” he says. “Where else would we sleep?”

“She could let us have her double bed and she could sleep in here. After all, he’s not coming back, Noel.”

“Shhh.”

“Wouldn’t that have been better?”

“What do you care?” Noel says. “You’re nuts about me, right?”

He slides up against me and hugs my back.

“I don’t know how people talk anymore,” he says. “I don’t know any of the current lingo. What expression do people use now for ‘nuts about’?”

“I don’t know.”

“I just did it again! I said ‘lingo.’ ”

“So what? Who do you want to sound like?”

“The way I talk sounds dated—like I’m an old person.”

“Why are you always worried about being old?”

He snuggles closer. “You didn’t answer before when I said you were nuts about me. That doesn’t mean that you don’t like me, does it?”

“No.”

“You’re big on the one-word answers.”

“I’m big on going to sleep.”

“ ‘Big on.’ See? There must be some expression to replace that now.”

I SIT in the car, waiting for Beth to come out of the building where the ballet school is. She has been taking lessons, but they haven’t helped. She still slouches forward and sticks out her neck when she walks. Noel suggests that this might be analyzed psychologically; she sticks her neck out, you see, not only literally but . . . Noel thinks that Beth is waiting to get it. Beth feels guilty because her mother and father have just been divorced. She thinks that she played some part in it and therefore she deserves to get it. It is worth fifty dollars a month for ballet lessons to disprove Noel’s theory. If it will only work.

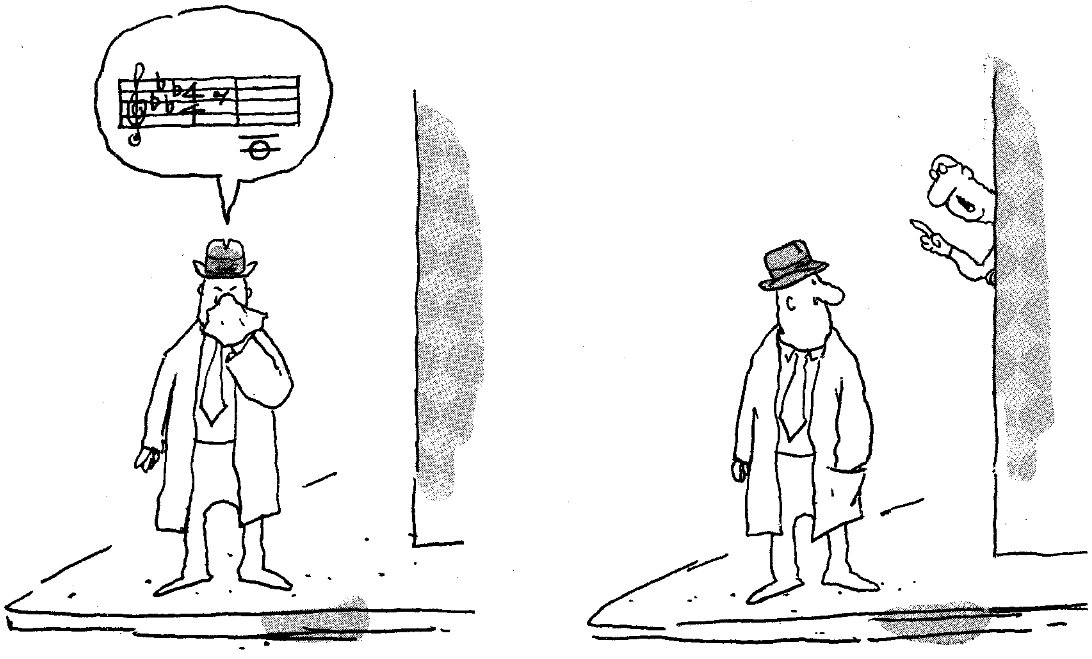
I SPEND the day in the Park, thinking over Noel’s suggestion that I move in with him. We would have more money. . . . We are together so much anyway. . . . Or he could move in with me, if those big windows in my place are really so important. I always meet reasonable men.

“But I don’t love you,” I said to Noel. “Don’t you want to live with somebody who loves you?”

“Nobody has ever loved me and nobody ever will,” Noel said. “What have I got to lose?”

I am in the Park to think about what I have to lose. Nothing. So why don’t I leave the Park, call him at work, say that I have decided it is a very sensible plan?

A chubby little boy wanders by,



wearing a short jacket and pants that are slipping down. He is holding a yellow boat. He looks so damned pleased with everything that I think about accosting him and asking, "Should I move in with Noel? Why am I reluctant to do it?" The young have such wisdom—some of the best and worst thinkers have thought so: Wordsworth, the followers of the Guru Maharaj Ji . . . "Do the meditations, or I will beat you with a stick," the Guru tells his followers. Tell me the answer, kid, or I will take away your boat.

I sink down onto a bench. Next, Noel will ask me to marry him. He is trying to trap me. Worse, he is not trying to trap me but only wants me to move in so we can save money. He doesn't care about me. Since no one has ever loved him, he can't love anybody. Is that even true?

I find a phone booth, and stand in front of it, waiting for a woman with a shopping bag to get out. She mouths something I don't understand. She has lips like a fish; they are painted bright orange. I do not have any lipstick on. I have on a raincoat, pulled over my nightgown, and sandals and Noel's socks.

"Noel," I say on the phone when I reach him, "were you serious when you said that no one ever loved you?"

"Jesus, it was embarrassing enough just to admit it," he says. "Do you have to question me about it?"

"I have to know."

"Well, I've told you about every woman I ever slept with. Which one do you suspect might have loved me?"

I have ruined his day. I hang up, rest my head against the phone. "Me," I mumble. "I do." I reach in the raincoat pocket. A Kleenex, two pennies, and a pink-rubber spider put there by Beth to scare me. No more dimes. I push open the door. A young woman is standing there waiting for me. "Do you have a few moments?" she says.

"Why?"

"Do you have a moment? What do you think of this?" she says. It is a small stick, with the texture of a salami. In her other hand she holds a clipboard and a pen.

"I don't have time," I say, and walk away. I stop and turn. "What is that, anyway?" I ask.

"Do you have a moment?" she asks.

"No. I just wanted to know what that thing was."

"A dog treat."

She is coming after me, clipboard outstretched.

"I don't have time," I say, and quickly walk away.

Something hits my back. "Take the time to stick it up your ass," she says.

I run for a block before I stop and lean on the Park wall to rest. If Noel had been there, she wouldn't have done it. My protector. If I had a dime, I could call back and say, "Oh, Noel, I'll live with you always if you'll stay with me so people won't throw dog treats at me."

I finger the plastic spider. Maybe Beth put it there to cheer me up. Once, she put a picture of a young, beautiful girl in a bikini on my bedroom wall. I misunderstood, seeing the woman as all that I was not. Beth just thought it was a pretty picture. She didn't understand why I was so upset.

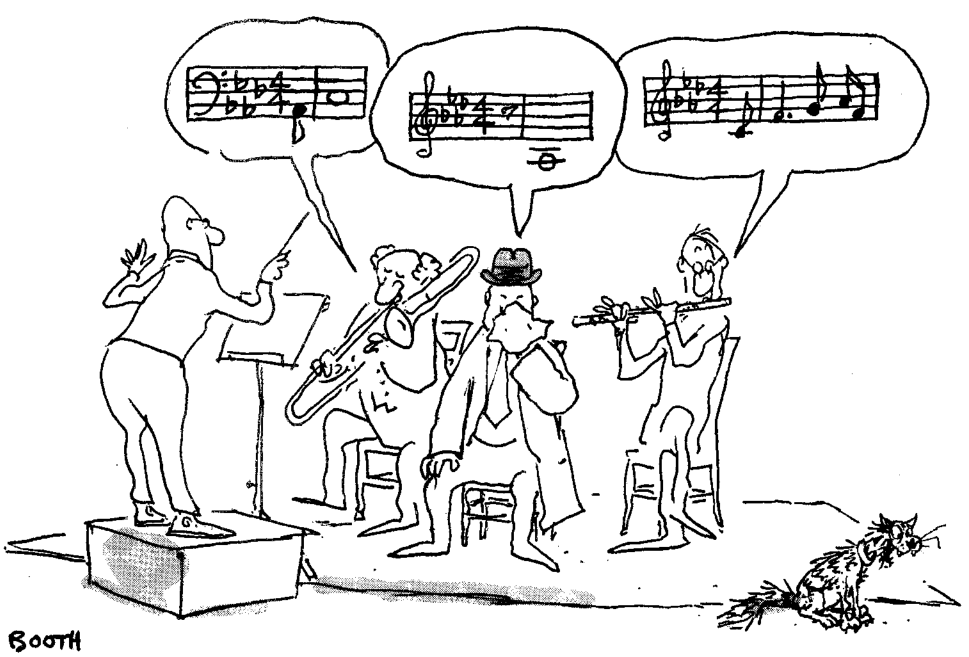
"Mommy's just upset because when you put things on the wall with Scotch Tape, the Scotch Tape leaves a mark when you remove it," Noel told her.

Noel is wonderful. I reach in my pocket, hoping a dime will suddenly appear.

NOEL and I go to visit his friends Charles and Sol, in Vermont. Noel has taken time off from work; it is a vacation to celebrate our decision to live together. Now, on the third evening there, we are all crowded around the hearth—Noel and Beth and I, Charles and Sol and the women they live with, Lark and Margaret. We are smoking and listening to Sol's stereo. The hearth is a big one. It was laid by Sol, made out of slate he took from the side of a hill and bricks he found dumped by the side of the road. There is a mantel that was made by Charles from a section of an old carrousel he picked up when a local amusement park closed down; a gargoyle's head protrudes from one side. Car keys have been draped over the beast's eyebrows. On top of the mantel there is an L. L. Bean catalogue, Margaret's hat, roaches and a roach clip, a can of peaches, and an incense burner that holds a small cone in a puddle of lavender ashes.

Noel used to work with Charles in the city. Charles quit when he heard about a big house in Vermont that needed to be fixed up. He was told that he could live in it for a hundred dollars a month, except in January and February, when skiers rented it. The skiers turned out to be nice people who didn't want to see anyone displaced. They suggested that the four stay on in the house, and they did, sleeping in a side room that Charles and Sol fixed up. Just now, the rest of the house is empty; it has been raining a lot, ruining the skiing.

Sol has put up some pictures he framed—old advertisements he found in a box in the attic (after Charles repaired the attic stairs). I study the pictures now, in the firelight. The Butter Lady—a healthy coquette with pearly skin and a mildewed bottom lip—extends a hand offering a package of butter. On the wall across from her, a man with oil-slick black hair



holds a shoe that is the same color as his hair.

"When you're lost in the rain in Juarez and it's Eastertime, too," Dylan sings.

Margaret says to Beth, "Do you want to come take a bath with me?"

Beth is shy. The first night we were here, she covered her eyes when Sol walked naked from the bathroom to the bedroom.

"I don't have to take a bath while I'm here, do I?" she says to me.

"Where did you get that idea?"

"Why do I have to take a bath?"

But she decides to go with Margaret, and runs after her and grabs on to her wool sash. Margaret blows on the incense stick she has just lit, and fans it in the air, and Beth, enchanted, follows her out of the room. She already feels at ease in the house, and she likes us all and wanders off with anyone gladly, even though she's usually shy. Yesterday, Sol showed her how to punch down the bread before putting it on the baking sheet to rise once more. He let her smear butter over the loaves with her fingers and then sprinkle cornmeal on the top.

Sol teaches at the state university. He is a poet, and he has been hired to teach a course in the modern novel. "Oh, well," he is saying now. "If I weren't a queer and I'd gone into the Army, I guess they would have made me a cook. That's usually what they do, isn't it?"

"Don't ask me," Charles says. "I'm queer, too." This seems to be an old routine.

Noel is admiring the picture frames. "This is such a beautiful place," he says. "I'd love to live here for good."

"Don't be a fool," Sol says. "With a lot of fairies?"

Sol is reading a student's paper. "This student says, 'Humbert is just like a million other Americans,'" he says.

"Humbert?" Noel says.

"You know—that guy who ran against Nixon."

"Come on," Noel says. "I know it's from some novel."

"'Lolita,'" Lark says, all on the intake. She passes the joint to me.

"Why don't you quit that job?" Lark says. "You hate it."

"I can't be unemployed," Sol says. "I'm a faggot and a poet. I've already got two strikes against me." He puffs twice on the roach, lets it slip out of the clip to the hearth. "And a drug abuser," he says. "I'm as good as done for."

"I'm sorry you feel that way, dear," Charles says, putting his hand gently on Sol's shoulder. Sol jumps. Charles and Noel laugh.

It is time for dinner—moussaka, and bread, and wine that Noel brought.

"What's moussaka?" Beth asks. Her skin shines, and her hair has dried in small narrow ridges where Margaret combed it.

"Made with mice," Sol says.

Beth looks at Noel. Lately, she checks things out with him. He shakes his head no. Actually, she is not a dumb child; she probably looked at Noel because she knows it makes him happy.

Beth has her own room—the smallest bedroom, with a fur rug on the floor and a quilt to sleep under. As I talk to Lark after dinner, I hear Noel reading to Beth: "'The Trout Fishing in America Journal of Alonso Hagen.'" Soon Beth is giggling.

I SIT in Noel's lap, looking out the window at the fields, white and flat, and the mountains—a blur that I know is mountains. The radiator under the window makes the glass foggy. Noel leans forward to wipe it with a handkerchief. We are in winter now. We were going to leave Vermont after a week—then two, now three. Noel's hair is getting long. Beth has missed a month of school. What will the Board of Education do to me? "What do you think they're going to do?" Noel says. "Come after us with guns?"

Noel has just finished confiding in me another horrendous or mortifying thing he would never, never tell anyone and that I must swear not to repeat. The story is about something that happened when he was eighteen. There was a friend of his mother's whom he threatened to strangle if she didn't let him sleep with her. She let him. As soon as it was over, he was terrified that she would tell someone, and he threatened to strangle her if she did. But he realized that as soon as he left she could talk, and that he could be arrested, and he got so upset that he broke down and ran back to the bed where they had been, pulled the covers over his head, and shook and cried. Later, the woman told his mother that Noel seemed to be studying too hard at Princeton—perhaps he needed some time off. A second story was about how he tried to kill himself when his wife left him. The truth was that he couldn't give David his scarf back because it was stretched from being knotted so many times. But he had been too chicken to hang himself and had swallowed a bottle of drugstore sleeping pills instead. Then he got frightened and went outside and hailed a cab. Another couple, huddled together in the wind, told him that they had claimed the cab first. The same couple was in the waiting room of the hospital when he came to.

"The poor guy put his card next to my hand on the stretcher," Noel says, shaking his head so hard that his beard scrapes my cheek. "He was a plumber. Eliot Raye. And his wife, Flora."

A WARM afternoon. "Noel!" Beth cries, running across the soggy lawn toward him, her hand extended like a fisherman with his catch. But there's nothing in her hand—only a little spot of blood on the palm. Eventually he gets the story out of her: she fell. He will bandage it. He is squatting, his arm folding her close like some giant bird. A heron? An eagle? Will he take my child and fly away? They walk toward the house, his hand pressing Beth's head against his leg.

WE are back in the city. Beth is asleep in the room that was once Noel's study. I am curled up in Noel's lap. He has just asked to hear the story of Michael again.

"Why do you want to hear that?" I ask.

Noel is fascinated by Michael, who pushed his furniture into the hall and threw his small possessions out the window into the back yard and then put up four large, connecting tents in his apartment. There was a hot plate in there, cans of Franco-American spaghetti, bottles of good wine, a flashlight for when it got dark . . .

Noel urges me to remember more details. What else was in the tent?

A rug, but that just happened to be on the floor. For some reason, he didn't throw the rug out the window. And there was a sleeping bag . . .

What else?

Comic books. I don't remember which ones. A lemon meringue pie. I remember how disgusting that was after two days, with the sugar oozing out of the meringue. A bottle of Seconal. There was a drinking glass, a container of warm juice . . . I don't remember.

We used to make love in the tent. I'd go over to see him, open the front door, and crawl in. That summer, he collapsed the tents, threw them in his car, and left for Maine.

"Go on," Noel says.

I shrug. I've told this story twice before, and this is always my stopping place.

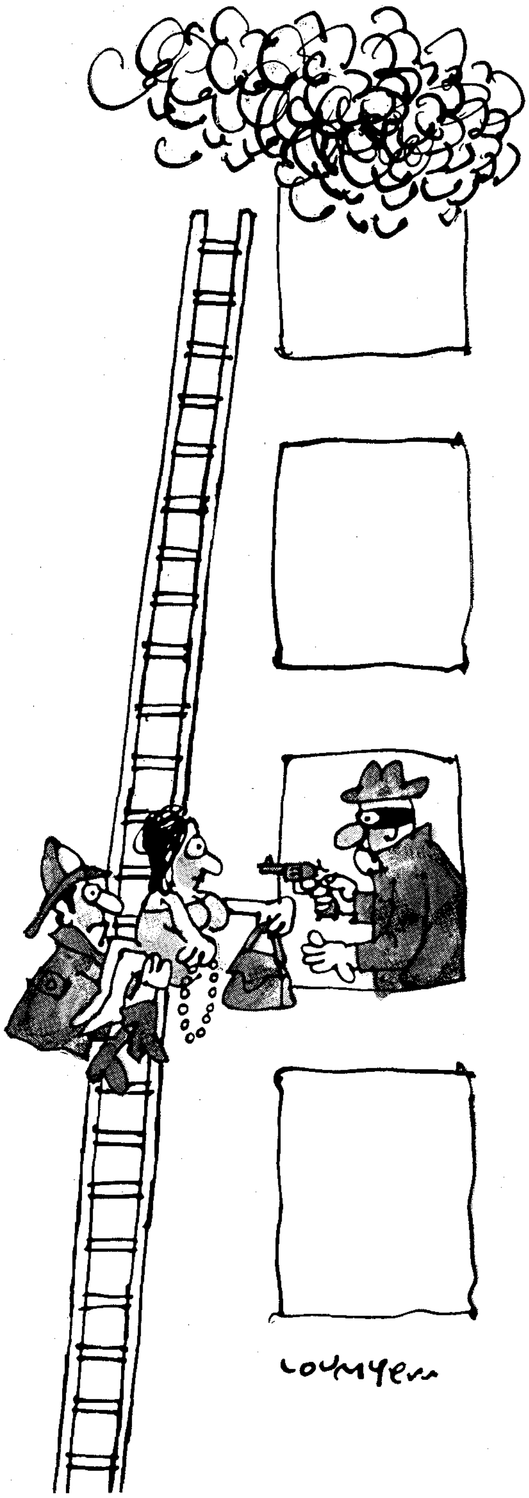
"That's it," I say to Noel.

He continues to wait expectantly, just as he did the two other times he heard the story.

ONE evening, we get a phone call from Lark. There is a house near them for sale—only thirty thousand dollars. What Noel can't fix, Charles and Sol can help with. There are ten acres of land, a waterfall. Noel is wild to move there. But what are we going to do for money, I ask him. He says we'll worry about that in a year or so, when we run out. But we haven't even seen the place, I point out. But this is a fabulous find, he says. We'll go see it this weekend. Noel has Beth so excited that she wants to start school in Vermont on Monday, not come back to the city at all. We will just go to the house right this minute and live there forever.

But does he know how to do the wiring? Is he sure it can be wired?

"Don't you have any faith in me?" he says. "David always thought I was a chump, didn't he?"



"I'm only asking whether you can do such complicated things."

My lack of faith in Noel has made him unhappy. He leaves the room without answering. He probably remembers—and knows that I remember—the night he asked David if he could see what was wrong with the socket of his floor lamp. David came back to our apartment laughing. "The plug had come out of the outlet," he said.

IN early April, David comes to visit us in Vermont for the weekend with his girl friend, Patty. She wears bluejeans, and has kohl around her eyes. She is twenty years old. Her clogs echo loudly on the bare floorboards. She seems to feel awkward here. David seems not to feel awkward, although he looked surprised when Beth called him David. She led him through the woods, running ahead of Noel and me, to show him the waterfall. When she got too far ahead, I called her back, afraid, for some reason, that she might die. If I lost sight of her, she might die. I suppose I had always thought that if David and I spent time together again it would be over the hospital bed of our dying daughter—something like that.

Patty has trouble walking in the woods; the clogs flop off her feet in the brush. I tried to give her a pair of my sneakers, but she wears size 8½ and I am a 7. Another thing to make her feel awkward.

David breathes in dramatically. "Quite a change from the high rise we used to live in," he says to Noel.

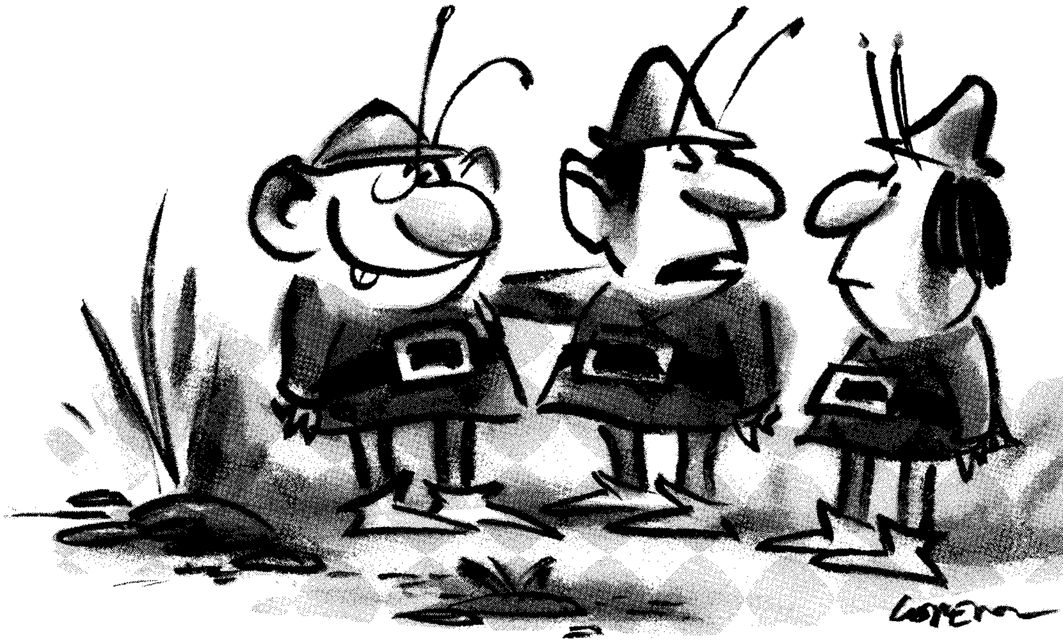
Calculated to make us feel rotten?

"You used to live in a high rise?" Patty asks.

He must have just met her. She pays careful attention to everything he says, watches with interest when he snaps off a twig and breaks it in little pieces. She is having trouble keeping up. David finally notices her difficulties in keeping up with us, and takes her hand. They're city people; they don't even have hiking boots.

"It seems as if that was in another life," David says. He snaps off a small branch and flicks one end of it against his thumb.

"There's somebody who says that every time we sleep we die;



"Ed here is a hobgoblin of little minds."

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we come back another person, to another life," Patty says.

"Kafka as realist," Noel says.

Noel has been reading all winter. He has read Brautigan, a lot of Borges, and has gone from Dante to García Márquez to Hilma Wolitzer to Kafka. Sometimes I ask him why he is going about it this way. He had me make him a list—this writer before that one, which poems are early, which late, which famous. Well, it doesn't matter. Noel is happy in Vermont. Being in Vermont means that he can do what he wants to do. Freedom, you know. Why should I make fun of it? He loves his books, loves roaming around in the woods outside the house, and he buys more birdseed than all the birds in the North could eat. He took a Polaroid picture of our salt lick for the deer when he put it in, and admired both the salt lick ("They've been here!") and his picture. Inside the house there are Polaroids of the woods, the waterfall, some rabbits—he tacks them up with pride, the way Beth hangs up the pictures she draws in school. "You know," Noel said to me one night, "when Gatsby is talking to Nick Carraway and he says, 'In any case, it was just personal'—what does that mean?"

"When did you read 'Gatsby'?" I asked.

"Last night, in the bathtub."

As we turn to walk back, Noel points out the astonishing number of squirrels in the trees around us. By David's expression, I can see that he still thinks Noel is pathetic.

I look at Noel. He is taller than David but more stooped; thinner than David, but his slouch disguises it. Noel has big hands and feet and a sharp nose. His scarf is gray, with frayed edges. David's is bright red, just bought. Poor Noel. When David called to say he and Patty were coming for a visit, Noel never thought of saying no. And he asked me how he could compete with David. He thought David was coming to his house to win me away. After he reads more literature he'll realize that is too easy. There will have to be complexities. The complexities will protect him forever. Hours after David's call, he said (to himself, really—not to me) that David was bringing a woman with him. Surely that meant he wouldn't try anything.

Charles and Margaret come over just as we are finishing dinner, bringing a mattress we are borrowing for David and Patty to sleep on. They are both stoned, and are dragging the mattress on the ground, which is white with a late snow. They are too stoned to hoist it.

"Eventide," Charles says. A circular black barrette holds his hair out of his face. Margaret lost her hat to Lark some time ago and never got around to borrowing another one. Her hair is dusted with snow. "We have to go," Charles says, weighing her hair in his hands, "before the snow woman melts."

SITTING at the kitchen table late that night, I turn to David. "How are you doing?" I whisper.

"A lot of things haven't been going the way I figured," he whispers.

I nod. We are drinking white wine and eating cheddar-cheese soup. The soup is scalding. Clouds of steam rise from the bowl, and I keep my face away from it, worrying that the steam will make my eyes water, and that David will misinterpret.

"Not really things. People," David whispers, bobbing an ice cube up and down in his wineglass with his index finger.

"What people?"

"It's better not to talk about it. They're not really people you know."

That hurts, and he knew it would hurt. But climbing the stairs to go to bed I realize that in spite of that it's a very reasonable approach.

Tonight, as I do most nights, I sleep with long johns under my nightgown. I roll over on top of Noel for more warmth and lie there, as he has said, like a dead man, like a man in the Wild West, gunned down in the dirt. Noel jokes about this. "Pow, pow," he whispers sleepily as I lower myself on him. "Poor critter's deader 'n a doornail." I lie there, warming myself. What does he want with me?

"What do you want for your birthday?" I ask.

He recites a little list of things he wants. He whispers: a bookcase, an aquarium, a blender to make milkshakes in.

"That sounds like what a ten-year-old would want," I say.

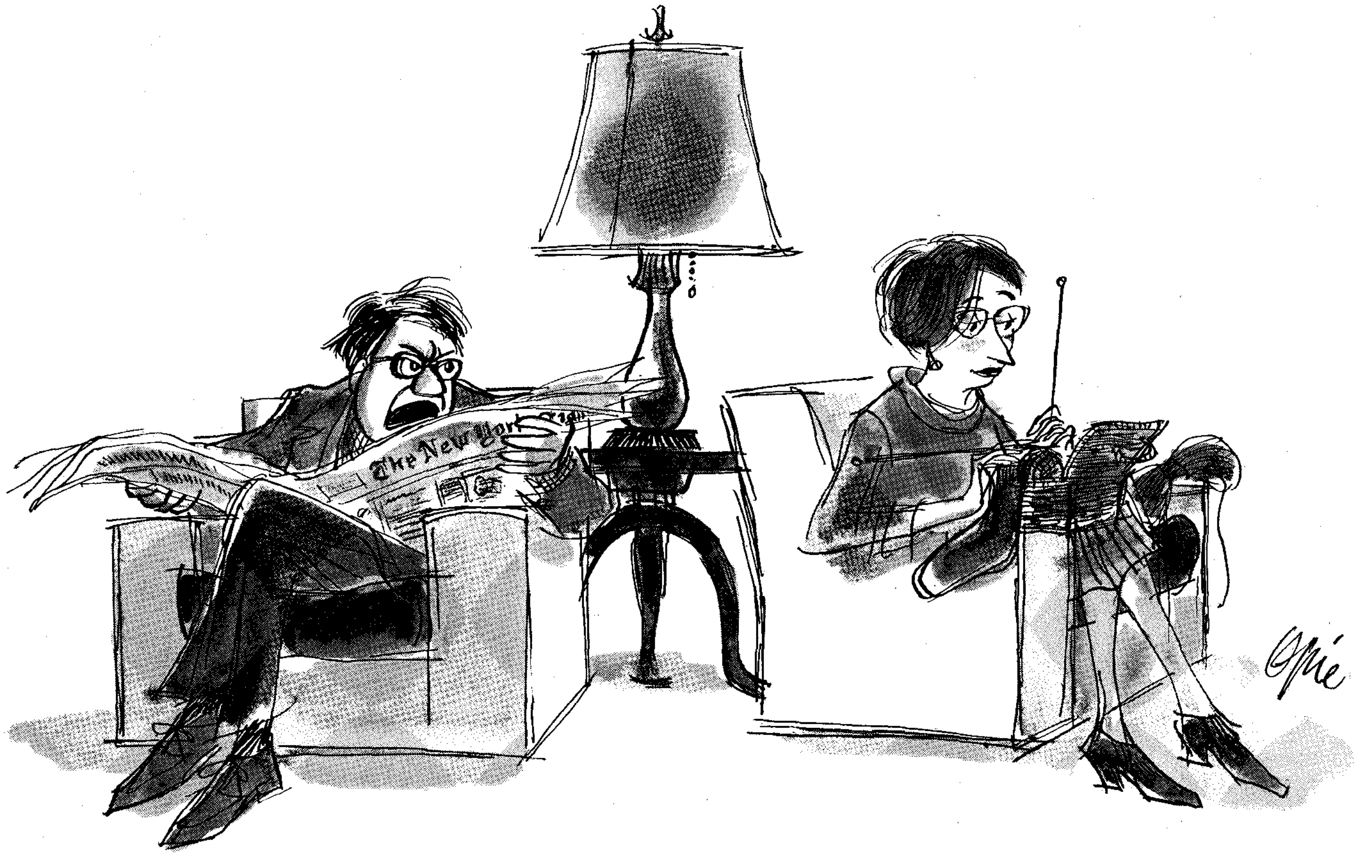
He is quiet too long; I have hurt his feelings.

"Not the bookcase," he says finally.

I am falling asleep. It's not fair to fall asleep on top of him. He doesn't have the heart to wake me and has to lie there with me sprawled on top of him until I fall off. Move, I tell myself, but I don't.

"Do you remember this afternoon, when Patty and I sat on the rock to wait for you and David and Beth?"

I remember. We were on top of the hill, Beth pulling David by his hand, David not very interested in what she was going to show him, Beth ignoring his lack of interest and pull-



"I've noticed that the point during a discussion at which you begin to worry about my ulcer is invariably the point at which I begin to turn the tide."

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ing him along. I ran to catch up, because she was pulling him so hard, and I caught Beth's free arm and hung on, so that we formed a chain.

"I knew I'd seen that before," Noel says. "I just realized where—when the actor wakes up after the storm and sees Death leading those people winding across the hilltop in 'The Seventh Seal.' "

SIX years ago. Seven. David and I were in the Village, in the winter, looking in a bookstore window. Tires began to squeal, and we turned around and were staring straight at a car, a ratty old blue car, that had lifted a woman from the street into the air. The fall took much too long; she fell the way snow drifts—the big flakes that float down, no hurry at all. By the time she hit, though, David had pushed my face against his coat, and while everyone was screaming—it seemed as if a whole chorus had suddenly assembled to scream—he had his arms around my shoulders, pressing me so close that I could hardly breathe and saying, "If anything happened to you . . . If anything happened to you . . ."

WHEN they leave, it is a clear, cold day. I give Patty a paper bag with half a bottle of wine, two sandwiches, and some peanuts to eat on the way back. The wine is probably not a good idea; David had three glasses of vodka and orange juice for breakfast. He began telling jokes to Noel—dogs in bars outsmarting their owners, constipated whores, talking fleas. David does not like Noel; Noel does not know what to make of David.

Now David rolls down the car window. Last-minute news. He tells me that his sister has been staying in his apartment. She aborted herself and has been very sick. "Abortions are legal," David says. "Why did she do that?" I ask how long ago it happened. A month ago, he says. His hands drum on the steering wheel. Last week, Beth got a box of wooden whistles carved in the shape of peasants from David's sister. Noel opened the kitchen window and blew softly to some birds on the feeder. They all flew away.

Patty leans across David. "There are so many animals here, even in the winter," she says. "Don't they hibernate anymore?"

She is making nervous, polite conversation. She wants to leave. Noel walks away from me, to Patty's side of the car, and tells her about the deer who come right up to the house. Beth is sitting on Noel's shoulders. Not wanting to talk to David, I wave at her stupidly. She waves back.

David looks at me out the window. I must look as stiff as one of those wooden whistles, all carved out of one piece, in my old blue ski jacket and blue wool hat pulled down to my eyes and my baggy jeans.

"*Ciao*," David says. "Thanks."

"Yes," Patty says. "It was nice of you to do this." She holds up the bag.

It's a steep driveway, and rocky. David backs down cautiously—the way someone pulls a zipper after it's been caught. We wave, they disappear. That was easy.

—ANN BEATTIE

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In addition, we have been joined in our battle by many physicians who have been awakened as the clanking chains of tyranny came closer. Second, we have verbalized our virtue and have grasped the moral initiative from the statist oriented and power hungry who have had their way too long. Some of them may not yet be aware the world has turned round many times since they first launched their philosophy, and the turning has worn holes in their sheep's clothing revealing the fallacies of their premises.—*Los Angeles County Medical Association Bulletin.*

People in sheep's clothing shouldn't carry chains.

A REPORTER AT LARGE

ANYTHING ADVERSE?

IT is perhaps not by mere coincidence that the widespread political invasion of citizens' privacy has occurred in an atmosphere in which commercial inquiries into the private affairs of individuals have become accepted as part of the price people pay for living in a credit-oriented society. The amount of consumer credit currently outstanding in this country is certainly of a remarkable order. According to Federal Reserve figures, it grew from a hundred and twenty-five billion dollars in 1970 to a hundred and eighty-two billion dollars in mid-1974. And as the amount of credit extended to consumers has grown, so has the business of investigating consumers' personal affairs. Such inquiries embrace not only debts and assets and buying habits but also employment records, medical records, and personal lives—the last often in astonishingly intimate detail. For the most part, such information is collected by private agencies on behalf of a widespread corporate clientele, and the agencies' activities constitute a service business that probably grosses a billion dollars a year.

Generally, the agencies that specialize in collecting information on consumers are of two kinds—credit bureaus and consumer-investigation agencies. Credit bureaus report to their clients—department stores and other retailers, businessmen, banks, credit-card companies, finance companies—what is known as ledger information on consumers; that is, information from existing records on how a consumer who has applied for credit has been paying his bills. About two thousand credit bureaus exist in the country. The largest companies in this field—for example, TRW Credit Data—serve as computerized clearing houses through which individual credit reports on consumers are instantly retrievable on behalf of credit granters, who pay a small fee for each inquiry into a consumer's credit standing. Five such networks exist to interlock information banks of credit bureaus in different cities. Probably a hundred million credit reports on consumers are transmitted to client companies each year by credit bureaus.

The second kind of company—the consumer-investigation agency—sells an essentially different service, which is the compilation and dissemination of reports on applicants for various kinds of insurance and the claims arising out of such insurance; it also reports on applicants for employment with private companies, and some home mortgages and apartment leases. The reports involve the verification of routine information that has already been supplied by citizens in response to questionnaires included in application forms for insurance, for employment, for mortgages or apartment leases. But many of the reports do more than verify applicants' answers to questionnaires; they purport to describe, among other things, the character, the reputation, the general style of life and work, the medical condition, the housekeeping habits, the drinking habits, and even the sexual habits of the people involved. Probably fifty million investigative reports on citizens are currently in the files of commercial consumer-investigation agencies, and this number does not include several million investigative reports compiled by large corporations themselves or by private detective agencies specializing in the investigation of people who have applied for employment.

Since any retailing, banking, insurance, or other company can order any of these various types of reports, many of which concern not only a customer's bill-paying and financial record but also his character and reputation, and since a total of more than two hundred million credit and investigatory files have been compiled on citizens, the amount of information available to creditors has become truly formidable. Such reports have often affected the daily lives of citizens very seriously, yet for reasons and in ways that the people involved have found mysterious and extremely hard to unravel or contend with.

One of the main problems with this largely subterranean industry has been that until recently it was almost entirely unregulated. In many instances, applicants for credit or insurance either were unaware of the fact that their lives were under investigation or had no knowledge of the true extent of the inquiries made into their affairs. A citizen's first intimation of the power exerted by such files usually came when his application for credit or insurance with a particular company was rejected. And that was only the beginning, for one rejection for credit or insurance tended to lead to future rejections, which in turn became part of an adverse record in the citizen's file in the reporting agency. If the citizen sought an explanation from the store or the insurance company that had rejected him, he was likely to be told merely that he had been judged to be a bad risk. More often than not, he had no idea that the information on which the rejection was based had been provided by a credit bureau or a consumer-investigation agency, but if he did suspect that such an agency was involved and tried to find out which agency had investigated him, his chances of getting concrete information were very thin. Something he had no way of knowing was that the standard contract between, say, one of the major consumer-investigation agencies and one of the big insurance companies might well call for the insurance company to conceal from anybody whose application had been turned down not only the fact of the agency's adverse report on him but also the name of the agency. If, against such odds, the rejected applicant did find out the name of the agency, that usually didn't do him much good, for the people at the agency would usually neither confirm nor deny that they had inspected his financial records or investigated his character and reputation. For many people—who, very often, had made their original applications for credit in response to a series of solicitations in the mail that virtually implored the consumer to apply—the refusal of credit turned into a nightmarish experience from which they were unable to extricate themselves. In 1969, a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency held hearings on a bill to correct abuses in the prevailing system of credit reporting. In introducing the bill, the subcommittee chairman, Senator William Proxmire, had cited the case of a Maine housewife who had been deprived of all her existing credit, her life insurance, her hospital insurance, and her car insurance because a consumer-investigation agency had reported her to have "bad morals"—a charge apparently based on the fact

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ICE
ICE

that for twelve years she had been the common-law wife of a man whose legal wife refused him a divorce. The Senator also cited the case of a Pennsylvania woman who had been turned down for major-medical insurance by an insurance company. Her husband, after repeated visits to insurance-company officials and complaints to the Pennsylvania insurance commissioner, was finally able to extract the reason: a report had indicated that she was an alcoholic. The truth appeared to be, Senator Proxmire asserted, that "the woman had never consumed more than a dozen drinks in twenty years of married life." Some consumers who had at one time or another received permission from creditors to postpone several installment payments because of unusual circumstances, such as illness, and had subsequently completed all their payments found themselves in difficulty later on in obtaining credit elsewhere, because the records of the credit bureau had omitted the true circumstances of the temporary delay in payments. And there were other reasonable circumstances under which some consumers might not have paid their bills in full—for example, if, through clerical error, they had been billed for goods they had not bought. In many such cases, letters of protest against the incorrect billing had simply gone unanswered by the merchants involved, but a black mark had nonetheless appeared in the credit records of these unfortunates, sometimes devastating their chances of obtaining further credit. For all too many consumers the business of finding out the facts and attempting to correct inaccurate credit records—to which, in any case, they had no legal right of access for inspection—was simply too much, and they were left to suffer the palpable consequences of invisible forces at work against them.

THE HEAD

1
The taste lingers, taste of you,
sweet wind. The night I had my mouth
wide open in astonishment, you went on in,
made flowers on my tongue. I'm thirsty,
and still not over you yet. Is there
nothing will make me forget?

2
Nose, how many questions do you keep
even after most of us have died? Are
you waiting, kind pooch, for something
to reproach me with? You have travelled
the globe, you have had the glove thrown
in your face, smelled the dark leather.
Is it death's yawn you require, the
absolute absence, the abscess?

3
Oh, I have smelled fine arms and long
gold hair, smelled the darkness coming
up from the lake with mud still
clinging to its boots, dead leaves,
bark of trees with fifty winters
on them. I have smelled the bad ends
of bones, yes, I have eaten the dark
wages. Nothing, nothing restrains
the nose.

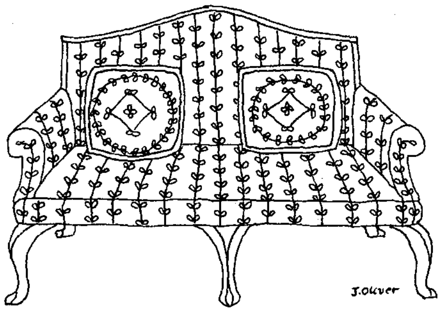
4
You are the cocked one, ear, the tricky
tunnel sliced in half, exposed along
the head, your coil works inward like a
worm. You're deaf to half of what
creates me, but how you burn, kind
guardian, defenseless one, another
avenue to crack my ego. They talk of
us, they really do. Keep nothing
from me, though it hurts.

5
Tongue, you are with me yet, though
the lies are legion. Tongue in the
groove, tongue you have toyed with
music, dreamed of yourself, the bald
soprano. I have heard your little
whispers to yourself, know how you
dream of poetry, that most decorous
of sorrows. But, oh, be silent for
a while, let us hear what company
you keep, let us hear the void.

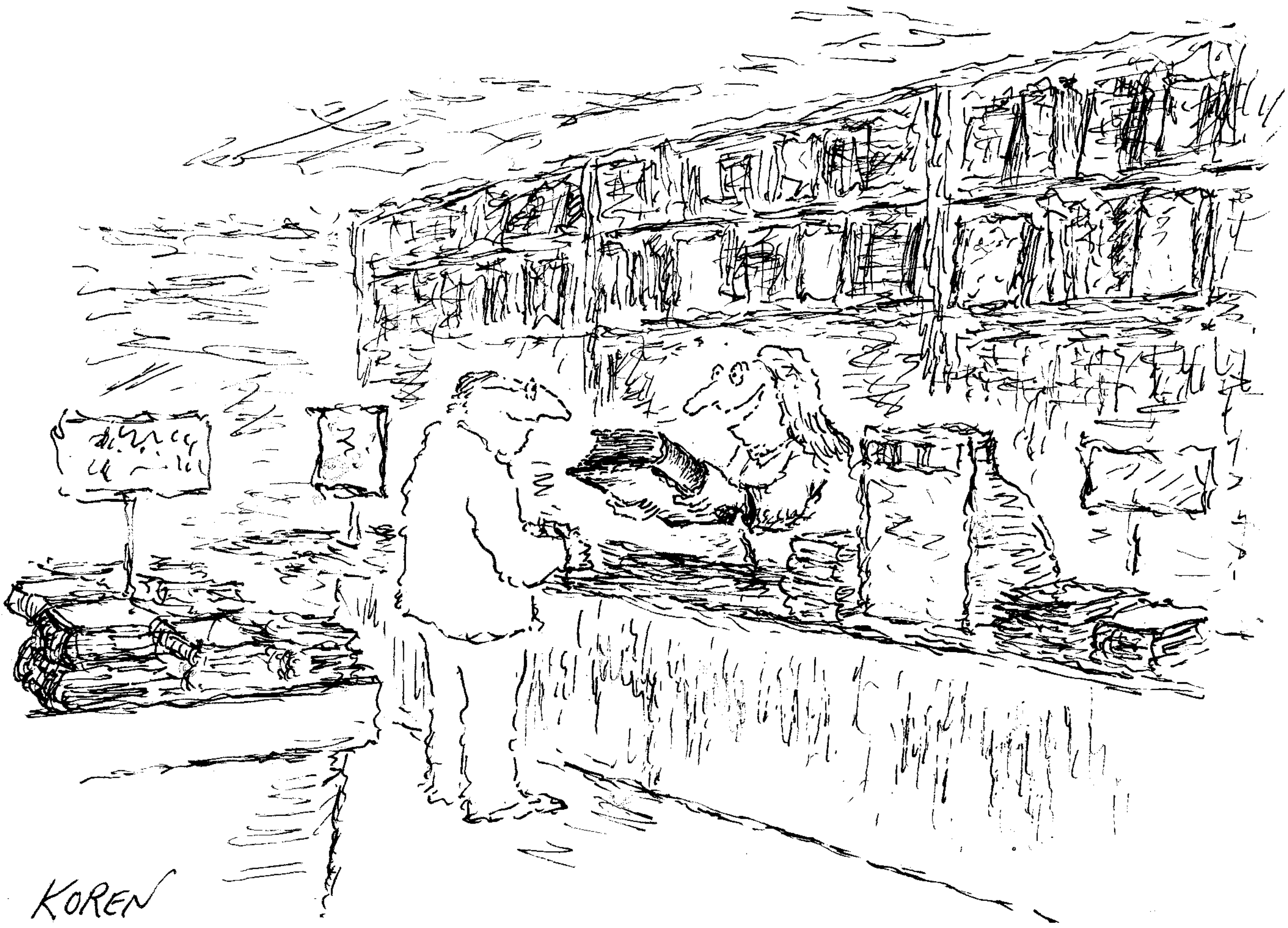
—Greg Kuzma

• •

All this was a situation that clearly called for remedial federal legislation, and in 1970, following the Senate subcommittee hearings on the problem, Congress passed the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which went into effect in April of 1971. Under this act, consumers enjoy several legal rights in the area of credit reporting: the right to be informed, upon application for insurance, for instance, that a report may be made on them; the right, when on the basis of reports from agencies they are denied credit, or are rejected for insurance or employment, or are given raised insurance rates, to be informed of the name and address of the agency making the report; the right to be informed of the nature and the sources (except for the names of investigators' informants) of data collected on them; the right to be told who has received reports on them during a specified period; the right to have incomplete or incorrect information in their dossiers reinvestigated and, where their complaints of inaccuracies are confirmed, to have the incorrect information deleted from their files; and the right to have withheld from reports on them—except those involving applications for high-paying jobs or very large amounts of credit or insurance—information more than seven years old, except when it relates to bankruptcies within the previous fourteen years.



The passage of the Fair Credit Reporting Act appears to have brought consumers relief from some of the more objectionable practices of credit bureaus and consumer-investigation agencies. But it also appears to have by no means put an end to the difficulties that consumers have been caused by the routine practices of these companies and the corporations hiring their services. Although, under the act, consumers who by applying for insurance or other services may precipitate the preparation by consumer-investigation agencies of reports on their character, general reputation, and so on, must be notified in writing by the organization they apply to that such investigations of them may take place, the investigation agencies don't need prior written permission from the consumers to look into their circumstances. Nor do they need to spell out for these consumers the means by which they intend to obtain their information, or the standards by which the consumers' character and reputation may be judged. And although, under the act, a citizen who is rejected for the service or employment he has applied for has the right to be informed orally of the burden of the information in his file, the act does not require unqualified full disclosure to him of the contents of his file, nor does it allow him to take away and keep a



"It has drama, humor, pathos, and practical information."

• •

written copy of the report. The act does not entitle the citizen to learn details of investigative reports that deal with his medical condition and health history—information that often causes an applicant for life, health, or even accident insurance to be turned down. Well over half of all the health insurance sold in this country is sold by life-insurance companies. (The rest is sold by nonprofit associations such as Blue Cross and Blue Shield.) When a citizen applies for life insurance, the application he signs contains a clause allowing the insurance company involved to undertake a medical examination of him through company-approved doctors or to have people representing the insurance company call on his own doctor, on a confidential basis, for information about his current and past state of health. Up until this past year, when rules on notification and disclosure were adopted, the citizen making the application almost never realized that a consequence of this simple assent may be that his medical records are obtained by a centralized organization called the Medical Information Bureau, which has been created by insurance companies, and that these records, in summary form, will wind up in a computer bank. Nor did he realize that his computerized medical history may be made available to any of the seven hundred life-insurance companies that are subscribers to the Medical Information Bureau. The applicant was unaware that if his application to one insurance company is turned down for any reason, his name and history automatically become part of what is, in effect, a computerized blacklist, warning seven hundred insurance companies that he has been rejected for insurance by a brother corporation. Since medical information may be used by the insurance industry to make decisions that profoundly affect people's livelihoods and lives, the citizen's inability—unless he himself takes the necessary steps to uncover the information—to find out just what is being reported concerning his state of health, and when and to whom, seems to be yet another blow struck against his privacy and sense of self.

Even in regard to information that the Fair Credit Reporting Act requires credit or insurance granters or their agents to give the citizen, the law does not afford him the kind of unobstructed and ready access to the contents of his file that, for example, a poor man or a member of a minority group, not equipped to wrestle with procedural or legalistic intricacies, clearly needs. And it does not give even those consumers who are reasonably well informed about the law sufficient means to hold reporting agencies fully accountable in the courts for inaccuracies in their reports. In October of 1973, Lewis A. Engman, the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, testified before a Senate subcommittee, "The present civil-liability sections of the [Fair Credit Reporting Act] do not appear to provide an adequate deterrent to noncompliance." And, Engman declared, "the chances of recovery of damages [for instance, denial of insurance or loss of employment because of false allegations in investigative reports] under the act are sufficiently remote, and the amount of recovery so insignificant, that private legal redress to date is virtually nonexistent."

OF the complaints that members of Congress continue to receive from citizens about the practices of the credit-reporting industry, the most serious in terms of the civil rights of the individual seem to concern the preparation, content, and use of reports that consumer-investigation agencies make on citizens' character and reputation. Most of these reports are triggered by applications for insurance. In this country, there are relatively few citizens who do not require insurance, whether it is life, homeowner's, automobile, or some other kind. (About two trillion dollars' worth of life insurance alone is currently in force, and the life-insurance premiums being paid annually exceed twenty-eight billion dollars.) In some important respects, applying for insurance is no mere voluntary act of prudence on the part of the ordinary citizen but a legal requirement imposed on him; for example, in a number of states he cannot obtain car registration without having taken out automobile liability insurance, nor can he maintain a standard mortgage on a house unless he possesses a homeowner's policy and keeps it in good standing.

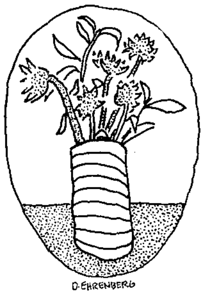
To the extent that taking out insurance is unavoidable for the citizen in this society, the insurance industry tends to be a seller's market and the buyer to be in a dependent relationship to that market as a whole. It appears that the work done by the consumer-investigation agencies, which have evolved to serve the insurance industry as a major customer, tends to reflect that relationship. And it tends to reflect it in ways and according to standards that the consumer finds difficult to understand—for the consumer-investigation business is an industry about which most people know very little. To begin with, the citizen is unlikely to be aware of the extent to which the consumer-investigation industry is dominated by one large corporation. That corporation is the Retail Credit Company, comprising ten companies and four divisions specializing in collecting and dispensing various types of "business information," whose headquarters are in Atlanta. The total revenues of Retail Credit in 1974 were two hundred and sixteen million dollars. The arm of the company concerned with consumer investigation operates throughout the United States and in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, maintains thirteen hundred branch offices around this country, and employs five thousand field investigators. It maintains files on forty-eight million citizens. Of these files, more than half represent consumer-investigation reports, the rest being more specialized reports having to do with property and information of public record. While concentrating its primary energies on consumer-investigation reports, Retail Credit also owns and operates a number of credit bureaus, more than half of them interlocked into Retail Credit's own network for electronic retrieval on a nationwide basis. The Retail Credit people claim to be currently making reports on Americans at the rate of twenty million a year, and they say that their investigators, in doing so, talk with a hundred and fifty thousand people during a typical working day. The reports are turned over to Retail Credit's commercial customers, who then decide for themselves whether—and, if so, on what

"I know! Let's play that adult game you got for Christmas."

terms—they will deal with the citizens who have been investigated. But the commercial customers of Retail Credit and similar organizations appear to be strongly influenced by the content of the investigative reports transmitted to them, and when information in a report is unfavorable to the consumer the consumer's application tends to be treated accordingly. Even if the adverse information contained in the report is true, the resulting setback for the citizen who has been investigated can be far more serious than he bargained for, but if the investigator's information is ill-founded or his reporting inaccurate the consumer can be enmeshed in a chain of adversity that assumes horrifying proportions.

William Ralph Stanley, of New Bern, North Carolina, appears to be such a victim of consumer-investigation reporting. On December 8, 1971, Stanley, who had various kinds of insurance—on his house, on his automobile, on a boat—with different agents, decided to consolidate his insurance in the hands of a local agency. The agency represented Lumbermens Mutual Casualty Company, a subsidiary of Kemper Insurance. According to Stanley, his applications for these specific insurance arrangements, including a thirty-five-thousand-dollar policy on his house in New Bern, were accepted, and he received the new policies on December 21, 1971. Shortly thereafter, however, he says, his local agent telephoned with some unwelcome news. The agent said he had been informed by Kemper Insurance that Stanley's application had been investigated and the resulting report was unfavorable. The agent said that the Kemper people wouldn't tell him the contents of the report—only that it was highly unfavorable—and that they were cancelling all of Stanley's insurance policies in the first two weeks of February.

This news gave Stanley a nasty jolt, and especially so because he could get no further information from his insurance agent. On December 27th, Stanley received a letter from Kemper Insurance formally notifying him that his policies were being cancelled. The only clue to the reason was the rather cryptic observation "This action was influenced by information contained in a report made at our request by a nationally known and reputable source of information for business decisions. This source is Retail Credit Co., Wilmington." Stanley, who was by now extremely upset, telephoned the Retail Credit Company's office in Wilmington, North Carolina, and demanded to see the report. After being required to provide satisfactory information concerning his identity, he was told that he could not see the report, but he was given over the telephone what he says were four items of adverse information from it, relating primarily to his bill-paying record. Stanley vigorously disputed all the adverse information, and demanded a reinvestigation of his standing in the community. But instead of receiving a reversal of the investigative report Stanley found other misfortunes falling upon him, one after another. He received a letter from the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles informing him that, since his insurance company had not sent the bureau a form showing him to possess automobile liability insurance, as North Carolina law required, his car registration was now invalid, and he was ordered to return his license plates. Then he received a letter from the company that held the mortgage on his house notifying him that since his homeowner's insurance policy had been cancelled, he was in default in complying with the terms of his mortgage. Stanley consulted a local attorney, who looked into the Fair Credit Reporting Act and concluded that the act had been violated in that Stanley, in applying for insurance, had not been informed, as the law required, that he might be subject to a consumer-investigation report. On February 1st, Stanley brought a civil suit under the act against Lumbermens Mutual Casualty and Retail Credit, charging that Lumbermens Mutual had cancelled his homeowner's policy on the basis of a Retail Credit investigation that had been illegally undertaken.



The day after Stanley filed his suit, in a federal court, he received a letter from Retail Credit informing him that the company was not legally required to supply him with a copy of the report on him and would not do so. But someone at Retail Credit had bungled, and Stanley found enclosed with the letter a copy of the very report that the company thought it had refused to supply. According to Stanley, the report rated his "business, financial, or employment reputation" and his "family reputation or associates" as "questionable." It alleged, among other things, that his bill-paying record was not good and that in insurance matters he was "claims-conscious," and it also asserted that his eighteen-year-old daughter—who Stanley says "didn't even date at that time"—was "running freely" with boys.

If these charges had been made in a report on a poor and uneducated man, his practical chances of remedial action would have been negligible. However, Stanley was neither poor nor uneducated. As it happened, he was the postmaster in New Bern, had held that office for seventeen years, and had been in the postal service for twenty-five years. Long before he was investigated by Retail Credit, his reputation and reliability had been investigated by the Postal Inspection Service and by the Civil Service Commission—a routine to which all postmasters are subjected. In addition—because the New Bern Post Office is in a federal building containing a number of other federal offices, to most of which he had access by a master key—Stanley had been subjected to an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

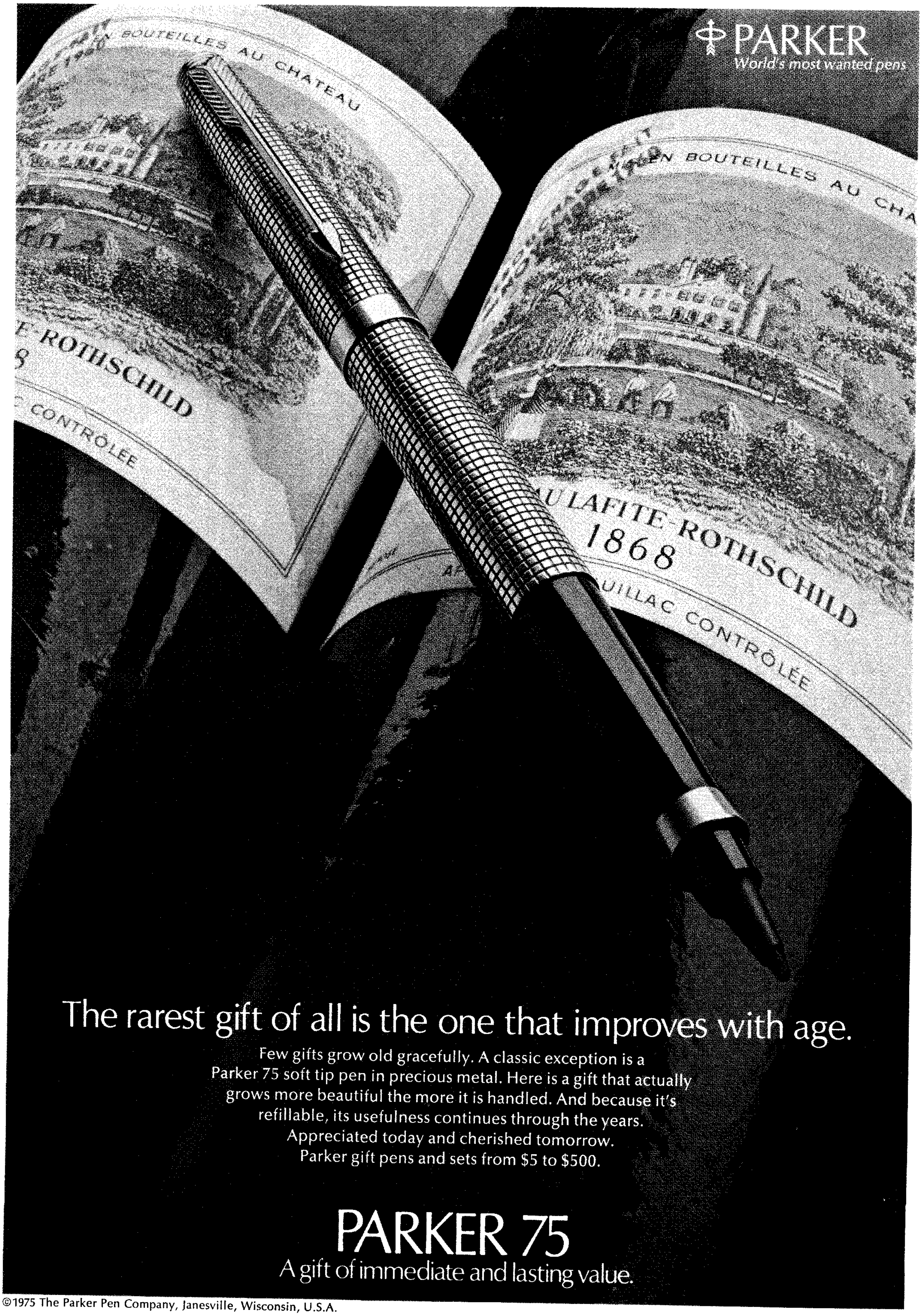
But even these credentials did not slow the momentum of the unfavorable report on Stanley. When, in desperation, Stanley sought to obtain insurance for his house and car from other insurance companies, the agents he approached said that they would not insure him, "since I had filed a suit against another insurance company." On top of everything else, Stanley received another letter from the company holding his mortgage, informing him that, owing to the default caused by his continued lack of a homeowner's insurance policy, it intended to begin foreclosure proceedings. Faced with this dire prospect, Stanley appealed to Federal District Judge John D. Larkins for relief, and in response the judge issued a restraining order requiring Kemper Insurance to keep Stanley's homeowner's and automobile insurance in effect pending the outcome of his lawsuit. The lawsuit, which was one of the first suits brought under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, was settled out of court, and Stanley was eventually able to obtain adequate insurance through an organization that specialized in providing insurance for government employees.

An experience that Terry L. Van Akin, of Phoenix, Arizona, had with the consumer-investigation industry did not involve any threat that he would lose the ownership of his home, but it was nonetheless an unhappy one. Van Akin, who was a free-lance photographer with an independent supplementary income, wrote a letter to Senator Proxmire last June recounting the circumstances. In October of 1971, he said, the Safeco Insurance Company, with which he had taken out insurance on his car, refused to renew his policy. He got in touch with an employee of an independent insurance agency to find out why, and the insurance agent reported to Van Akin that, according to his information, Safeco had used the services of the Retail Credit Company to investigate him. Van Akin told Senator Proxmire that he had had no prior notification or subsequent knowledge that such an investigation of him was planned or had taken place. The agent let Van Akin know the content of the Retail Credit report on him and, Van Akin told Senator Proxmire, was later reprimanded by his superior for doing so. According to Van Akin, Retail Credit reported to Safeco that Van Akin had no visible means of support and that—in Van Akin's words—"some long-haired people" had been seen at his home. Van Akin said that he considered these people to be his friends, and that they were repairing the place. He complained to Senator Proxmire that he had got in touch with the local and home offices of Retail Credit concerning the report on him but that "they both refused to give me any information." As a result of Safeco's refusal to renew his insurance policy, he said, he was automatically relegated to the "assigned risk" category, which meant that he was forced to buy insurance at a high premium rate, and in the three years since he had had to pay two hundred dollars a year extra.

Stephen R. Little and his wife, Carol, of Charlevoix, Michigan, are among those citizens who feel that their privacy was intruded upon and that they were economically discriminated against as a result of an inaccurate report. A year and a half ago, Mrs. Little wrote to Senator Robert Griffin, of Michigan, about their difficulties. She explained that in July of 1973 her husband applied for, received, and paid for an automobile-insurance policy with the State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company. But a few weeks later he received a notice of cancellation from State Farm, which said that the termination had been "influenced" by a report from the Retail Credit Company. Mr. Little telephoned Retail Credit's Grand Rapids office to find out the cause of the cancellation, and, after he had identified himself satisfactorily, "a Mr. Andrews" at Retail Credit read from the investigative report on them prepared at the request of State Farm. "The report was incredible," Mrs. Little wrote. "It pertained to our residence in Eugene, Oregon, a residence we had moved from in May, 1973! According to Mr. Andrews, we were refused auto insurance for the following reasons: The area we lived in (Laurel Hill Valley) is a low-income area, most of the houses in the area are shacks, the lawns are unkempt, the residents of this area move in and out quite frequently, there was an older woman living in the house with us, we have no children . . . my husband was employed as a musician and had no other jobs, and a lot of drugs are used in the area." In her letter to Senator Griffin, Mrs. Little noted that, aside from the fact that the report described an environment the couple did not live in at the time the insurance application was made, it was full of inaccuracies, including the information that Mr. and Mrs. Little had no children and that there was an older woman living in the house. She wrote that while Laurel Hill Valley was a low-income area, "almost all of our neighbors had resided in their present homes for at least ten years, and their lawns were immaculate." As a matter of fact, she added, the lawn of the house where the Littles had lived was mowed regularly by their landlord, who happened to be a state policeman. Mrs. Little went on, "The only two areas I can envision being investigated are our driving records and whether or not we pay our bills. I am not aware of any outstanding bills and I have never had a moving violation in twelve years of driving. My husband had an illegal left turn five years ago and that's the extent of his moving violations. It seems to me that if anyone would be a safe bet for an insurance company it would be us." She concluded, "We are outraged. We are individuals and we demand that attention be paid."

"Boy! The Brothers Grimm could really grind them out!"

Mr. and Mrs. Harold O. Leeman, of Cary, North Carolina, also had an upsetting experience with a consumer-investigation report, and Mrs. Leeman wrote to Senator Proxmire about it a year ago. She said that the couple had recently moved to North Carolina from Maine, and that once they were settled in North Carolina they had applied for automobile insurance. "We went to Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company for it and [the insurance application] was accepted," she wrote. "Then we received a notice that they were cancelling our insurance." She said she and her husband were informed by Nationwide that a Maine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The rarest gift of all is the one that improves with age.

Few gifts grow old gracefully. A classic exception is a Parker 75 soft tip pen in precious metal. Here is a gift that actually grows more beautiful the more it is handled. And because it's refillable, its usefulness continues through the years. Appreciated today and cherished tomorrow. Parker gift pens and sets from $5 to $500.

PARKER 75

A gift of immediate and lasting value.

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There were bridesmaids and ushers,
family and friends. (A moment we shared
with a church full of people.)
That day, I gave you a wedding ring
that told of all our hopes and dreams…
and today, I give you this.

It's called an eternity ring, and it tells of a love far deeper than we could have hoped for or dreamed of back then.

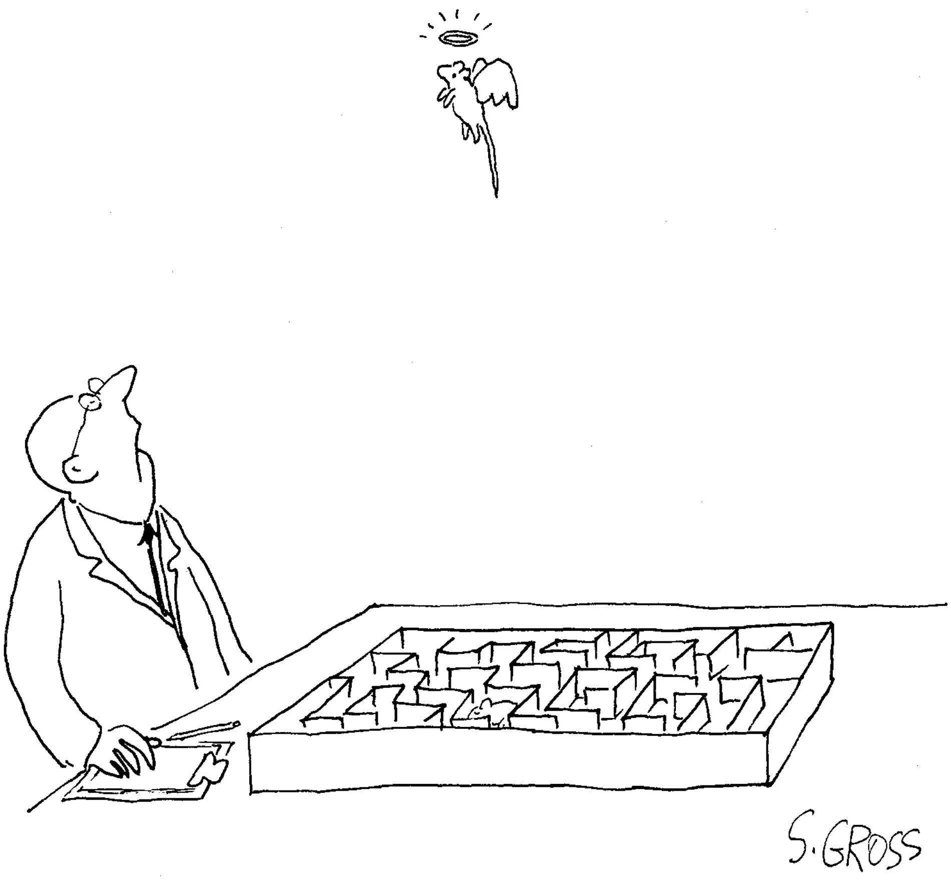
And this makes it a moment for nobody else but us.

A diamond eternity ring.

De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.

Ask your jeweler for
"The diamond eternity ring" booklet.

office of the Retail Credit Company had reported that "my husband and I had lived together prior to our marriage." Mrs. Leeman said that this allegation was untrue, and that she and her husband had insisted that Retail Credit undertake another investigation. The reinvestigation showed the original report to have been inaccurate. Mr. and Mrs. Leeman then changed insurance companies—though they had no guarantee that they were thus able also to change the agency investigating them. Mrs. Leeman seemed puzzled over what conceivable connection there could be between her living arrangements before her marriage, however inaccurately reported, and the couple's ability to drive cars carefully. "I am forty-five years old and my husband is fifty," she wrote. "Our driving records are spotless and our credit rating is excellent. . . . This whole mess has had me very upset, to say the least."

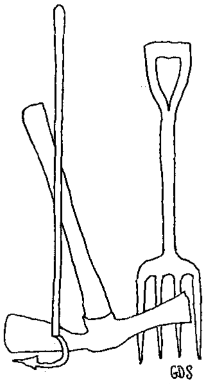


As a result of such letters from consumers, Senator Proxmire held a series of subcommittee hearings early in October of 1973 to examine abuses within the credit-reporting industry and to consider further remedial legislation, in the form of a bill, introduced by the Senator himself, to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Among other things, the bill would entitle consumers not only to inspect the files compiled on them by credit bureaus and consumer-investigation agencies but also to receive a written copy of the information in the file; it would require that a citizen rejected for credit, employment, or insurance be informed in writing of the specific reasons for the rejection; and it would strengthen the consumer's right to have clear prior knowledge of investigative reports and to maintain reasonable privacy in connection with them. But the Proxmire bill provoked what a subcommittee staff member calls "very intense lobbying" against it by the Retail Credit people and by lobbyists for the insurance industry, who were supported by trade associations representing powerful allies—retailers, finance companies, and the banking industry. (Counter-lobbying on behalf of the bill by consumer groups was virtually nonexistent, it seems, and a staff man on the Proxmire subcommittee complained to me that even the usual vigorous behind-the-scenes consumer advocacy of the ubiquitous Ralph Nader was missing on the issue.) The efforts of the industry lobbyists seemed to prevail, and in November the bill was tabled by the subcommittee. Undeterred, Senator Proxmire held a one-day hearing on credit-reporting abuses in February of 1974. Several former investigators for the Retail Credit Company gave testimony critical of the credit-reporting industry, charging, among other things, that Retail Credit pressured its field investigators to adhere in their reporting practice to what amounted to a quota system for the production of adverse information on consumers. To these charges the Retail Credit people replied with strenuous denials that such a quota system existed, and they severely called into question the competence, experience, and truthfulness of the former investigators making the charges. The new subcommittee hearing had no more effect on advancing the Proxmire amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act than the previous hearings, and once again the will of the leadership of the credit-reporting industry seemed to prevail on Capitol Hill.

IN view of the great impact that credit reports can have on the lives of citizens, it seems appropriate to examine this influence not only in terms of the personal standards the companies deem desirable for citizens under investigation but also in terms of the qualifications and work standards set by the reporting companies for their own investigators. According to a copy of a Retail Credit Company "Manager Manual" that I have come by, the prime requirement for a Retail Credit investigator is that he be "mature" and possess "the necessary balance and judgment" for the job. "Some college education" is preferred in applicants, but they do not have to be college, or even high-school, graduates. Their height and build should be well within normal bounds: "For investigative work an individual's appearance should not attract undue attention because of unusual or peculiar characteristics." Preferably, their previous work experience should have been "along clerical or sales lines." Managers are told that while "in our highly specialized business" there is "as yet no formula for 100% success in picking a 'natural born' Field Representative," certain personal attributes among applicants are important. Such as:

> Appearance—Does the prospective Field Representative look normal and healthy, energetic and alert, neat and pleasant, mature and businesslike?
>
> Approach—Does the prospect have a good handshake, clear voice, and look you in the eye? Create confidence immediately?

Then, there is the rather delicate matter of judging how the applicant reacts when the Retail Credit investigator's role is described to him. "What is the applicant's reaction to your explanation of the Field Representative's job?" managers are asked in the manual. "Is there genuine interest in asking strangers questions about friends or is that construed as prying?" Another section of the manual goes deeper into this question. It states that a good investigator "must believe in himself and his job to the point that he characteristically regards his role as that of a 'party to a contract' rather than as a 'snooper.'" He "must not be afraid to ask personal questions," and "should be sufficiently suspicious by nature to derive satisfaction from tracking down leads and developing the facts." To develop them, "the top-notch Field Representative should be highly sensitive to the more subtle clues in the remarks of his sources and other behavior, perceiving their implications and adapting his own approach and conversation accordingly." As he does so, a "sense of humor" will prove to be "a powerful instrument in the development of a warm, friendly relationship with sources. In fact," the manual adds, "some of the most pertinent personal information is sandwiched in between homey remarks and other small talk." A pleasant manner is important for an investigator, since it "appeals to everyone. Moreover, appropriate use of facial expression is most helpful in the two-way communication with sources." Although the ideal investigator may have to be a bit tricky in worming information out of his sources, he must nonetheless be "a totally honest individual" who will be "willing to check any unfavorable information with full confirmation from another source." Although applicants must be alert, a "favorable factor" for them is the possession of "average intelligence." And the word "average" is not used casually in the "Manager Manual;" it stresses the point that "as is well known, many high-grade and capable people simply do not fit our work." The manual explains that while the abilities required of a Retail Credit investigator are seldom found in people whose intelligence is below average, "a person with exceptionally high intelligence . . . might become less tolerant of the routine aspects of the job."



An unemployed newspaperman named Ronald Semple discovered this fact, to his dismay, when he applied to the Key West, Florida, office of Retail Credit for a job as an investigator. In 1969, by then the managing editor of the *Gazette*, in Billings, Montana, he wrote to Senator Proxmire about that experience:

> I filled out the usual employment applications and answered a batch of questions, centering mainly on my experience as a newspaper reporter and editor. I gathered that Retail Credit considered me to be more qualified for an investigative job than the usual applicant. . . . I was invited to return for another interview which would be conducted by another Retail Credit man, this one from Miami. I also had to take a batch of tests measuring my intelligence. . . . I ran into serious trouble with the intelligence test. I was too intelligent . . . The Retail Credit man from Miami put it to me bluntly. He said that had I scored but one point higher, my application would have been automatically cancelled. He said that company personnel studies had proved that Retail Credit prospered when it hired men of "above average but not superior" intelligence. . . . But the man from Miami said he was willing to go out on a limb for me and he was ready to argue my case before some higher-ups in Atlanta. . . . His best was apparently not good enough. I spoke to the local Retail Credit man on the telephone some days later and was told that I could not have the job.

It is possible that Semple's case is an exceptional one, and that the standards he described for the Key West office of Retail Credit do not apply in other branches of the company. But the company's instructions to its managers do seem to indicate an employment policy favoring people of conventional outlook and screening out people who might harbor tendencies toward nonconformist intellectualizing and the making of fine distinctions and who might become sufficiently restless to lose "the necessary balance and judgment" for the job of investigating consumers.

According to the Retail Credit people, the standards set for their investigators are strict. They include the allowance of adequate time for investigations of consumers, the requirement that investigations be made through face-to-face interviews—if not with the consumer himself, then with friends or acquaintances of his. An investigation must include a neighborhood visit by the investigator assigned to the case. And any information of an adverse nature that is gathered on the subject of the investigation must be independently confirmed in a face-to-face interview with at least one source other than the original informant. Above all, the information gathered must be accurate, free of imprecision, and fair to the person under investigation as well as to the interests of the commercial customer who has ordered the investigation. When a substantial question about the accuracy of a report is raised, a reinvestigation of the subject must be made, and any information in the original report that is adverse to the subject must be checked carefully for veracity with further independent sources.

This account, however, hardly accords with what I have been able to learn of the operating procedures of the Retail Credit Company, both from the testimony of witnesses before the Proxmire subcommittee last year and from interviews that I have had with former investigators for Retail Credit. What the statements of these people convey is that the preparation of most reports for insurance companies and other commercial clients is a mill, in which work quotas are all-important considerations, in which inaccuracies abound, and in which the personal reputation or credit standing of the citizen under investigation often falls victim to a system that is insufficiently accountable either to the law or to the public.

Retail Credit undertakes a large variety of investigations, including investigations of people making insurance claims and mortgage applications; just how thorough and accurate some of the more extensive of these investigations are is hard to determine. Most of the complaints that investigators make about the standards of the business seem to center less on the preparation of specialized reports, such as those on damage claims, than on the preparation of routine investigative reports for life, health, and automobile insurance—the reports that make up the biggest single part of Retail Credit's business. One measure of the nature of this problem is the amount of money that Retail Credit charges its clients for these routine reports. The average full field investigation of an individual conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation is reckoned to cost at least five hundred dollars. The usual fee that Retail Credit charges its clients for a routine investigation of an applicant for life, health, or car insurance is between five and seven dollars. (Special investigations involving very large transactions may run as high as two hundred dollars.) According to the testimony of former investigators before the Proxmire subcommittee, and the investigators I have interviewed, a Retail Credit investigator is given a quota of between fifteen and twenty investigations to complete each working day. That is supposed to include the investigator's travel time, his interviewing time, and the time he takes to make his actual report. To ease the work burden somewhat, the investigator usually dictates his reports into a

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recording machine, and the recording is then transcribed by a typing pool. If the fee for an individual investigation is six dollars, the investigator gets about half for himself, but out of that he must usually pay travel expenses and a dictation fee for the typed transcript of the report.

For an investigator to earn between eight and ten thousand dollars a year, he has to complete between seventy-five and a hundred routine investigations a week, or—allowing for a brief vacation—between three thousand and five thousand such investigations a year. Between this income to be earned and these investigations to be completed stand the character and reputation of the citizen reported on, and it seems that in the investigator's struggle to cope with the work assigned him the citizen can be caught in a disadvantageous position. Former investigators have testified before the Proxmire subcommittee that they found it impossible to fulfill their work quota and at the same time adhere to the investigatory standards set forth in the company's operating manual. William F. Boaz, who had had twenty years of experience as a Retail Credit investigator, testified during last year's hearings that if an investigator for the company were to conduct his investigations according to the formal requirements of the company manual "he could not possibly maintain an average of eight cases per day" but that for economic reasons "it is essential for him to complete eighteen to twenty cases per day." This statement was largely confirmed by Dick Riley, who had spent fifteen years with Retail Credit. Riley testified that anyone adhering to the standards of the company manual could complete only between six and ten investigations a day. Sometimes the daily quota was imposed not only on full-time investigators but also on those working part time. Mark S. Brodie, who was a student at the Washington College of Law, at American University, while working part time for Retail Credit in 1973, testified that the load of investigations he was given on an average working day was fifteen, even though he was supposed to be putting in only four hours, and that his investigative load occasionally reached twenty-two cases a day. A former Retail Credit investigator who until recently was in an executive position with the company in a large Eastern city told me that at certain times in the office "I've seen the investigators loaded with up to fifty cases a day." He said that as an executive he was given an ultimatum by his superiors—"to exert pressure on people to make them work more cases and longer hours" or lose his position.

According to witnesses before the Proxmire subcommittee and to Retail Credit investigators I have talked with, such pressure, although it may vary in intensity from one branch office to another, in general is ever present—is a permanent feature of consumer investigations. The basic salaries paid Retail Credit investigators—there is a bonus system, too, for exceeding the quota—are directly related to the number of consumers they investigate daily. "The higher the salary, the greater number of reports [the investigator] must produce," Riley has said. "Pressure is constantly placed on the men to meet their production quotas, and the home office submits a list of all field representatives and their production for each week. This list is placed on the bulletin board in each office." Riley has also stated, "If a field representative is below his production . . . he is then told to increase these figures. Any field representative who fails to meet his daily quotas is then put on probation, and if he still fails to meet his quotas he is fired." Considering that what is at stake here, aside from the career of the investigator, is the reputation, character, and creditworthiness or insurability of the citizen who is subjected to this checking system, the citizen's chances of being rated in a reasonable manner for the service he has applied for are considerably less than excellent.

The work quota to be handled daily by individual investigators is not the only major difficulty with the credit-reporting system. The charges of witnesses before the Proxmire subcommittee of the existence of a company quota system for the production of adverse information on consumers have—in spite of the company's denials—been confirmed and elaborated upon by former Retail Credit investigators with whom I have talked at length. These people say that investigators are routinely obliged to inform the company of the percentage of reports containing adverse information on the citizens they investigate. This adverse information is generally classified in the trade as either "protective" or "declinable." A protective feature in a report is a cautionary flag for the attention of the insurance company ordering up the investigation, and points to the need for the customer's evaluation of the citizen's reliability or insurability. A declinable feature is one that the client would probably consider suffi-

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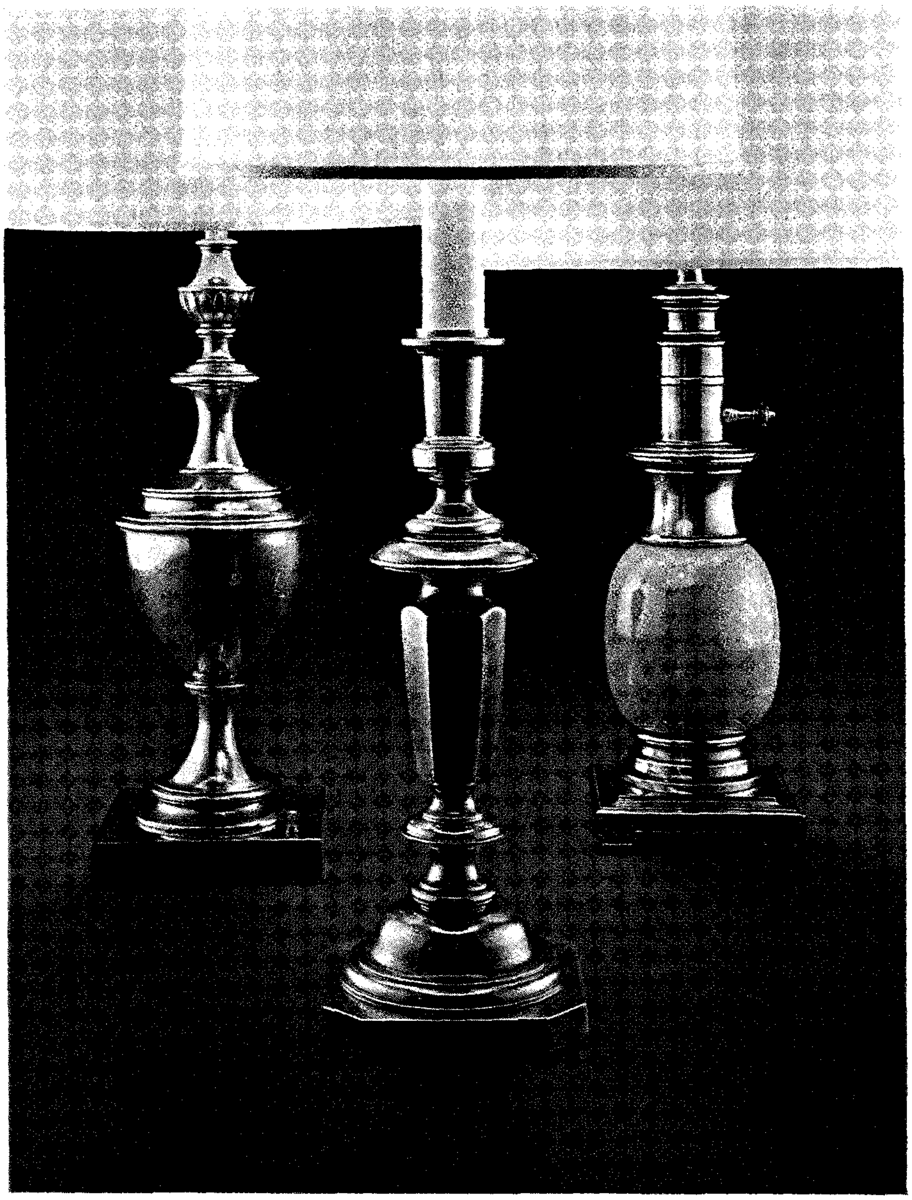

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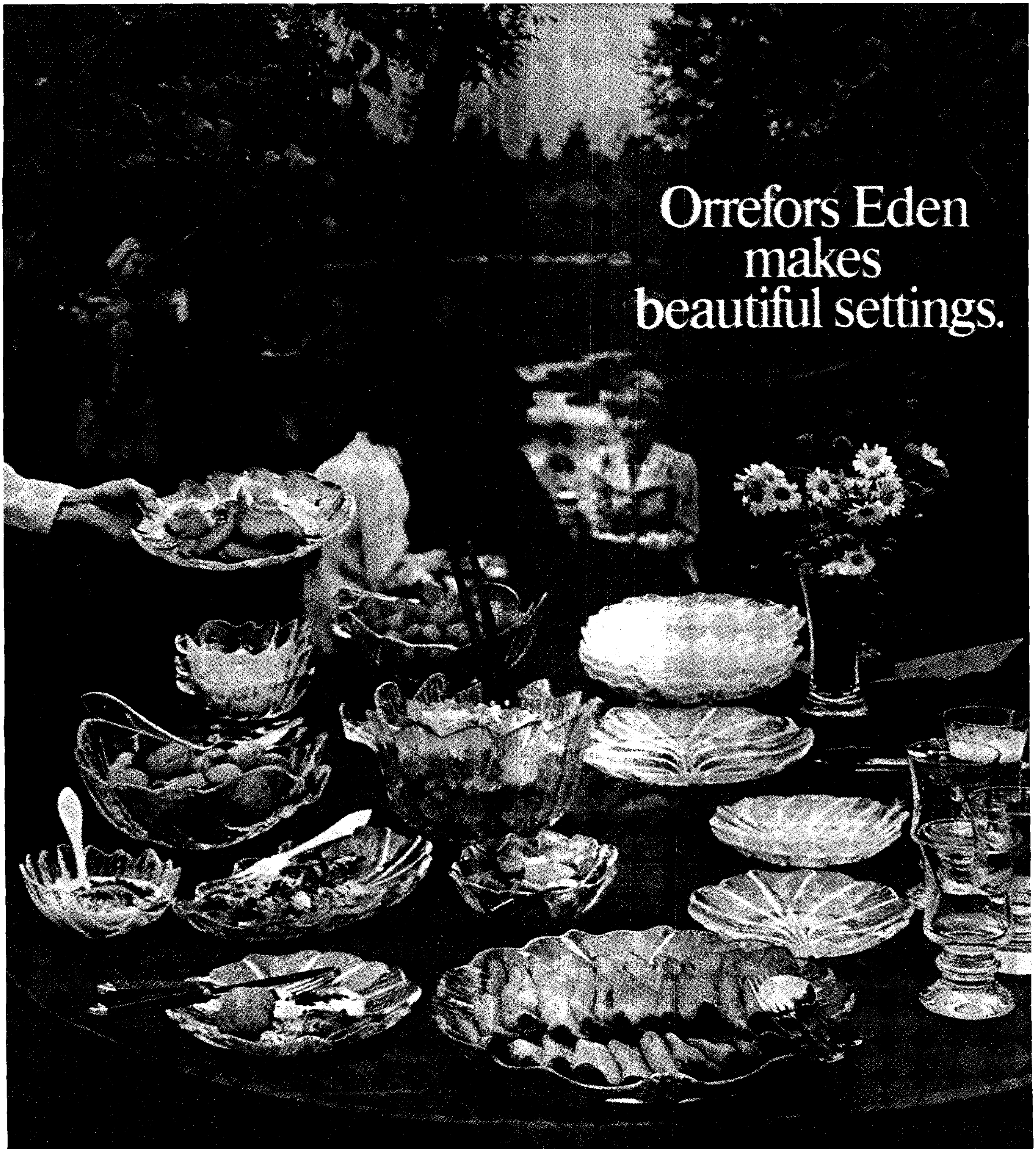

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cient cause in itself for rejection of the consumer's application.

According to the testimony of William Boaz, "at the end of each month, each [Retail Credit] office throughout the country has to file a report [stating] the protective and decline information which was secured for that month." Brodie says he was told during his service as a part-time investigator at Retail Credit that forty per cent of his reports should contain protective notations and six per cent declinable. In other words, forty per cent of the reports were to include cautionary material about the consumer's character, habits, and reputation, and six per cent were to include information so adverse as to be a likely cause for rejection of the consumer's application. An investigator recently employed by Retail Credit told me, "If you don't meet your quota on adverse information, you can have your reports audited, be disciplined, and not have a salary increase given you—and, in general, have various kinds of action taken against you." Other investigators have said that the action taken may include dismissal from the company. Riley has testified that investigators who fail to meet these and other quotas "are told to shape up or ship out."

If Retail Credit Company investigators preparing reports on citizens for commercial purposes consider themselves unable to complete the number of investigations assigned to them daily and still adhere to the investigative standards set forth in the company manual, how do they manage to meet their production quotas? From what I have been able to gather, people who go to work as investigators for Retail Credit do initially try to live up to the investigative standards set for them. But the pressure to churn out investigations in volume appears to be such that the employees are led into taking certain shortcuts to keep up. Brodie has testified that when he went to work for Retail Credit as an investigator, he conscientiously sought to make proper personal inspections of the neighborhoods where the subjects of the investigations assigned to him lived and to interview their neighbors according to the methods prescribed in the company manual. To do this, he says, "I attempted to lay out a route plan of all my cases so they would follow one after the other." But he discovered that even using the most efficient planning of his visits "there was still no way in which to [complete] even eight or nine cases a day." His daily quota, he said, was almost twice that number. Another investigator,

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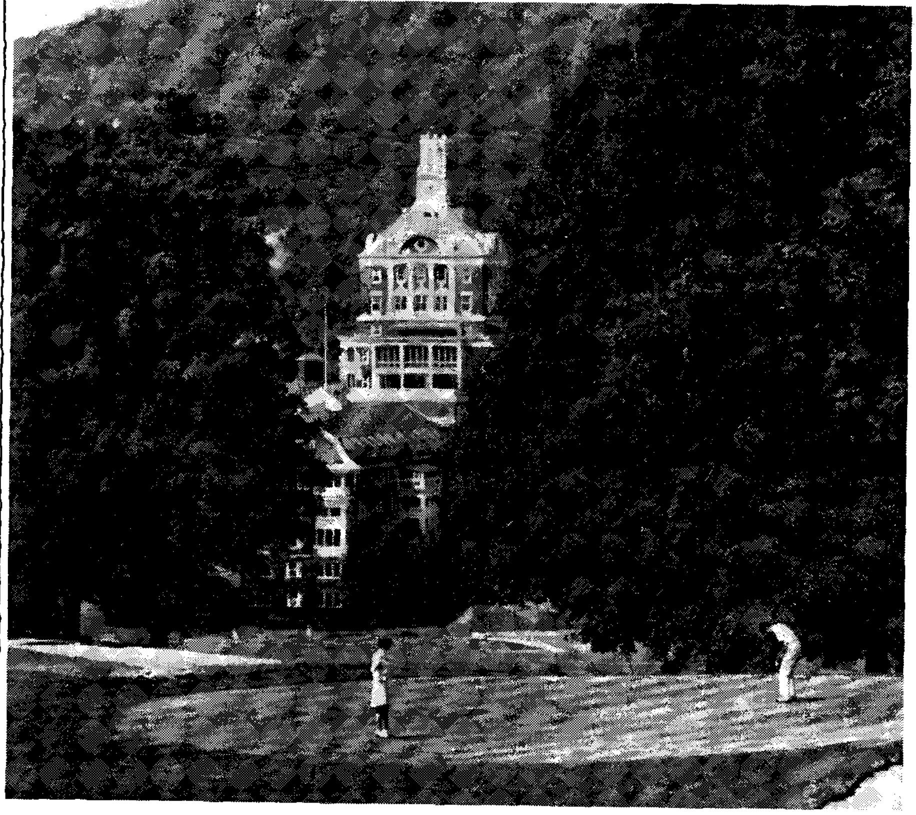

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who until fairly recently was employed by the American Service Bureau, one of Retail Credit's competitors, and who previously had had some experience as an investigator, said that when he first went to work for the company "I always did go to the neighborhoods" and tried hard to live up to the standards laid down in the company manual but found that by doing so "I fell behind in my work." He says that when his pattern of work became evident to his superiors, "it was brought home to me that that wasn't the way to do it—without anyone saying so, exactly."

Brodie has testified that in order to meet his quota he was obliged to use what he came to realize was an approach all too common among staff people investigating consumers—an approach in which face-to-face interviews with the subjects and their neighbors were abandoned in favor of timesaving devices. One of these was the substitution of telephone calls for the required personal interviews. The widespread use of this shortcut has been confirmed by other former Retail Credit investigators. Riley has testified that instead of undertaking face-to-face interviews with neighbors of the person under investigation "use of the telephone is very common" among Retail Credit people, and that "I have seen field representatives use nothing but the telephone and never leave the office." It seems, however, that other investigators prefer to leave the Retail Credit office during working hours and do their telephoning from their homes. Of contact with the citizen under investigation, Riley has said, "One shortcut is to telephone an individual and when he answers hang up," the reason for this technique being that "this way you have determined that he is still alive at the date of the investigation."

Another substitute for the face-to-face interviews is what people in the Washington office of Retail Credit called "zinging." Brodie, testifying before the Proxmire subcommittee, defined the term this way: "A 'zing' means you do nothing. You do not contact the investigatee. One does not go out on the streets. . . . He utilizes whatever information was supplied by the insurance company [that requested the investigation] and, hopefully, looks up the insured in the phone book to assure that he lives there; then you just fill in the form." Riley has testified that in the Retail Credit Company office where he worked there was a procedure for meeting production quotas that was known as "the crystal-ball system" and "consists of quoting old reports and, at times, just looking at an inquiry and determining that the individual 'looks O.K.' "

If a citizen under investigation or his neighbor is in fact interviewed over the telephone by an investigator, rather than face to face, the investigator still has to solve the problem—where there appears to be adverse information—of citing a second source (usually another neighbor), who is also supposed to have been interviewed in person. To get around this requirement, the investigator, according to Brodie, will enter on the company form a suitable name and address: "You just pull [names] out of the hat and place them on the back of the form, or, if you have the time, look up [the names of] neighbors in an address directory." Brodie told me of one report that "showed a whole family" living at an address that on reinvestigation turned out to be a parking lot, and of another investigator who, in his haste, "zinged a dead man" and delivered an investigative report concerning his insurability. Brodie went on to say that in his experience a Retail Credit Company investigator who dispensed with visits to the neighborhoods of people under investigation and with the required face-to-face interviews would prepare a report on the basis of about five minutes' work on the telephone. A man who until recently was employed by Retail Credit and whose responsibilities there included supervision of investigators declared to me in an interview not long ago that in the branch office where he worked, in a large Eastern city, "only three out of every ten reports are actually based on personal interviews." An investigator who until recently was employed in another large city by a competitor of the Retail Credit Company told me, "Although each case requires a neighborhood visit, the work load makes this impossible. The vast majority [of reports] are therefore 'faked out' at the typewriter."

If the allegations that a substantial number of consumer-investigative reports contain bogus elements are true, it does not necessarily follow that the reputation, the credit standing, and the insurability of citizens who are the subjects of such reports are injured by them. A substantial part of whatever bogus information is supplied by investigators may be of a neutral nature, or may even tend to favor the consumers rather than damage them. A man with experience as a Retail Credit investigator in the Washington area

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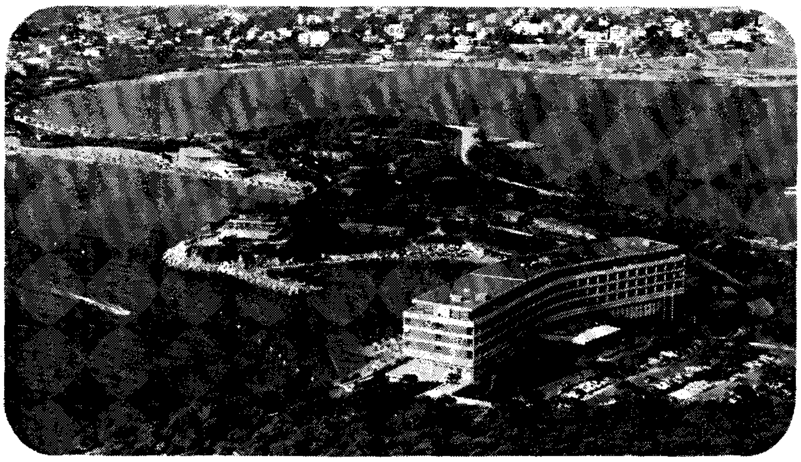

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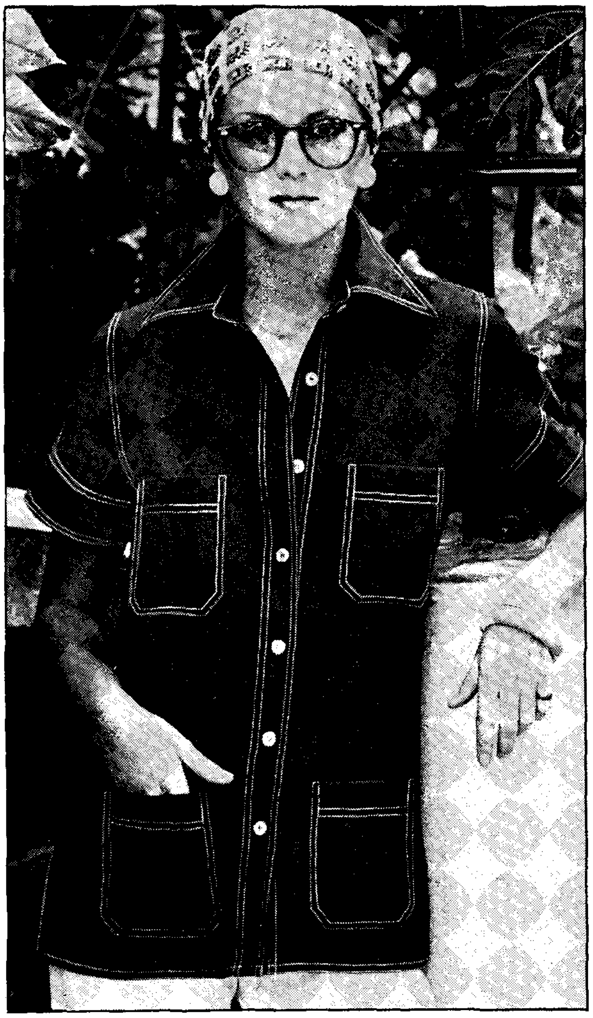

described to me what he said was a typical way for an investigator to cut corners in the course of the day's work: "You take what looks like a good clean one—the case of a middle-class guy living in the Washington suburbs. You say that he works for the government, and you give him a clean slate. An investigator will turn out twenty, thirty cases a day like that." He went on, "It's the insurance companies that lose on such cases. They pay five or six dollars for a report and don't get anything." In other cases, he said, the consumer under investigation really is interviewed and neighbors are visited. The burden of what this investigator had to say, however, was that the work load imposed on investigators does make for widespread abuses.

If middle-class citizens living in suburban areas may get off with relatively clean slates, this does not necessarily hold true for lower-class people, especially those living in inner cities. Brodie told me that when he worked as an investigator in Washington he would do his best to make personal visits, in addition to resorting to use of the telephone, while he was investigating consumers who lived in predominantly black areas of the city, but that "other guys wouldn't go over there—they're afraid to, so they telephone." He added, "It's hard to zing cases in low-income areas—family situations are often so funny."

The question of possible discriminatory practices in consumer-investigative reporting on the ground of race is one that has been raised by several investigators who have become disillusioned with the system. In the course of my inquiries into the industry, I learned—and officers of Retail Credit conceded—that until about five years ago certain reporting forms bore the code letters "AS," meaning Anglo-Saxon. Up to 1967, report forms for Retail Credit investigators assigned to workmen's-compensation cases required the investigators to specify "predominant races" in the area in which the applicant lived, and the information required on subjects living, say, in apartment houses included "racial descent" of the other tenants. The 1965 edition of a Retail Credit "Inspector's Handy Guide" contained, in a section headed "West Indian Island Races," the question "Is the applicant pure Caucasian or a mixture? Describe the individual if a mixture of races to show whether predominantly Caucasian or Negro. It is not practicable to attempt to estimate percentages." The company's instructions for obtaining the information required for fire-insurance applications on churches specified that inquiries be made as to "whether the congregation is composed of Negro or white people, or general racial makeup of congregation." Such questions were eliminated in revised instructions issued by the company in 1967. However, the questions asked of investigators on more recent typical Retail Credit work forms include "Anything adverse about living conditions or neighborhood?" and, under "Details of Environment," this: "Neighborhood: Deteriorating physically, poor sanitation, vice and crime, vandalism, etc.?" Where any large metropolitan city nowadays is concerned, it takes very little imagination to translate these into inquiries about whether the citizen under investigation is an inner-city resident. Such investigating standards in the industry are by no means confined to those apparently held by the Retail Credit Company. An investigator employed until recently by a competitor of Retail Credit's—he gave up his investigative job because, he says, he developed a "personal objection to the inspection work"—wrote me not long ago:

> Neighborhood descriptions are often included in reports to produce "environment" quotas. I can only state that according to my lifelong knowledge of this city such descriptions are invariably exaggerated . . . and seem to serve only to suggest [that] the applicant is non-white. There is no neighborhood in the [particular greater-city] area that could affect an applicant's life expectancy to the degree significant to an [insurance] underwriter.

He went on, "With the exception of myself the . . . full-time inspectors in [this branch] office live in white middle-income suburbs some distance, geographically and socially, from the inner city. They share the racial and class prejudices of their [fellow-suburbanites] and allow these attitudes to saturate the tone of their reports."

THE gathering of adverse information on consumers in the course of investigations presents special problems for the investigator as well as for the citizen who is subject to investigation. Portents of adverse commentary seem to hover over the whole investigatory process. Although Retail Credit does own a number of credit bureaus that compile so-called ledger information on consumers, the bulk of its work is in the area of consumer investigations, which are supposed to deal with the subjects' character and reputation rather than with their bank balances and charge-account records. Most people find the idea of having their character

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investigated an unattractive one, and the use of the name "Retail Credit" by investigators tends to suggest that the interviews they request concern routine credit checks—dealing simply with the subjects' financial status—rather than investigation of the character and reputation of the subjects. The word "investigation" is not supposed to be used, it seems, for fear of untoward reactions. A Retail Credit "Field Representative Manual" notes, "The terms 'investigation' and 'report' have negative connotations. Avoid them in favor of 'inspection' or 'information.' " The manual formally instructs investigators to use the company name when they are conducting interviews, and tells them what to say if "an individual may have difficulty associating [the name Retail Credit] with insurance reports." For example, to the question "What is the Retail Credit Company?" the investigator is supposed to reply, "A corporation engaged in furnishing information about people for business purposes . . . mainly in connection with insurance, employment, and credit transactions. The Company is international in its scope." If a neighbor being interviewed asks, "What company is this for?," the investigator, who is instructed that "we must not on any occasion divulge the identity of our customer to an outside source," is supposed to reply, "This is for the Retail Credit Company. We provide services for many companies. It would not be proper for us to reveal their names."

However, the instruction that investigators identify themselves, even by such circumlocutions as these, often appears to be ignored in practice, particularly where investigations of claims are involved. Here and there in Retail Credit forms that I have seen, the word "pretext" is typed in to indicate the interviewing technique to be used. What this means, according to investigators, is that subterfuge and concealment of the true source or nature of the investigation are to be used in order to obtain information for the report. This hardly accorded with the spirit of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and an internal memorandum of Retail Credit in May of 1971, a month after the act had gone into effect, seemed to take the principle to heart. Headed "Indirect Approach Investigations," the memo instructed investigators, "Effective immediately it is essential that all Indirect Approach investigations be made in accordance with the following instructions: The approved and only acceptable approach is for the Field Representative to identify himself by name and indicate that he is from the Retail Credit Company." Nonetheless, it appears that the approach is not always as direct as that. I have seen one investigative report, made in 1973, that begins with the words "We interviewed the subject's father under pretext and found the following."

Boaz told the Proxmire subcommittee of such a pretext employed in the investigation of a citizen who was applying for automobile insurance: "You contact [the citizen] by telephone and maybe you say you are conducting a survey for the county and you want to know how many schoolchildren are in the home. You have the man's name and age on the inquiry. . . . Your primary objective is, does he have any youthful drivers." And Riley testified that other ploys used were "telling the person or persons that [the company is] bringing their credit files up to date, although the person or persons may have never applied for credit," and telephoning the subject of the investigation and informing him that "you are obtaining information for the city directory to be published."

Since the quotas required of investigators appear to involve not only the number of reports turned out but also, according to former investigators for Retail Credit and other such companies, the amount of adverse information gathered on consumers, the citizens approached are seldom aware of the full ramifications of the interviews. It is certainly unlikely to occur to these citizens that the investigator, who represents himself as being interested only in making reasonable and fair-minded inquiries concerning a subject's insurability, might be under the pressure of directives such as this one quoted by Boaz before the Proxmire subcommittee: "Our protective and decline [rate] is below company standards. It is essential that you find more protective and decline cases by the end of the month." Or of salesmanship practiced on higher company levels with prospective or actual customers in the insurance industry such as is indicated by this Retail Credit Company memorandum to managers of branch offices in northern California:

> Good news. We have the American National Insurance Company in St. Louis, Acct. # 11700, business back in California from American Service Bureau.
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> This customer has completed the competitor trial with American Service Bureau in the State of California, and although our time service was almost identical with ASB, we developed more Usable and Protective Information. As a

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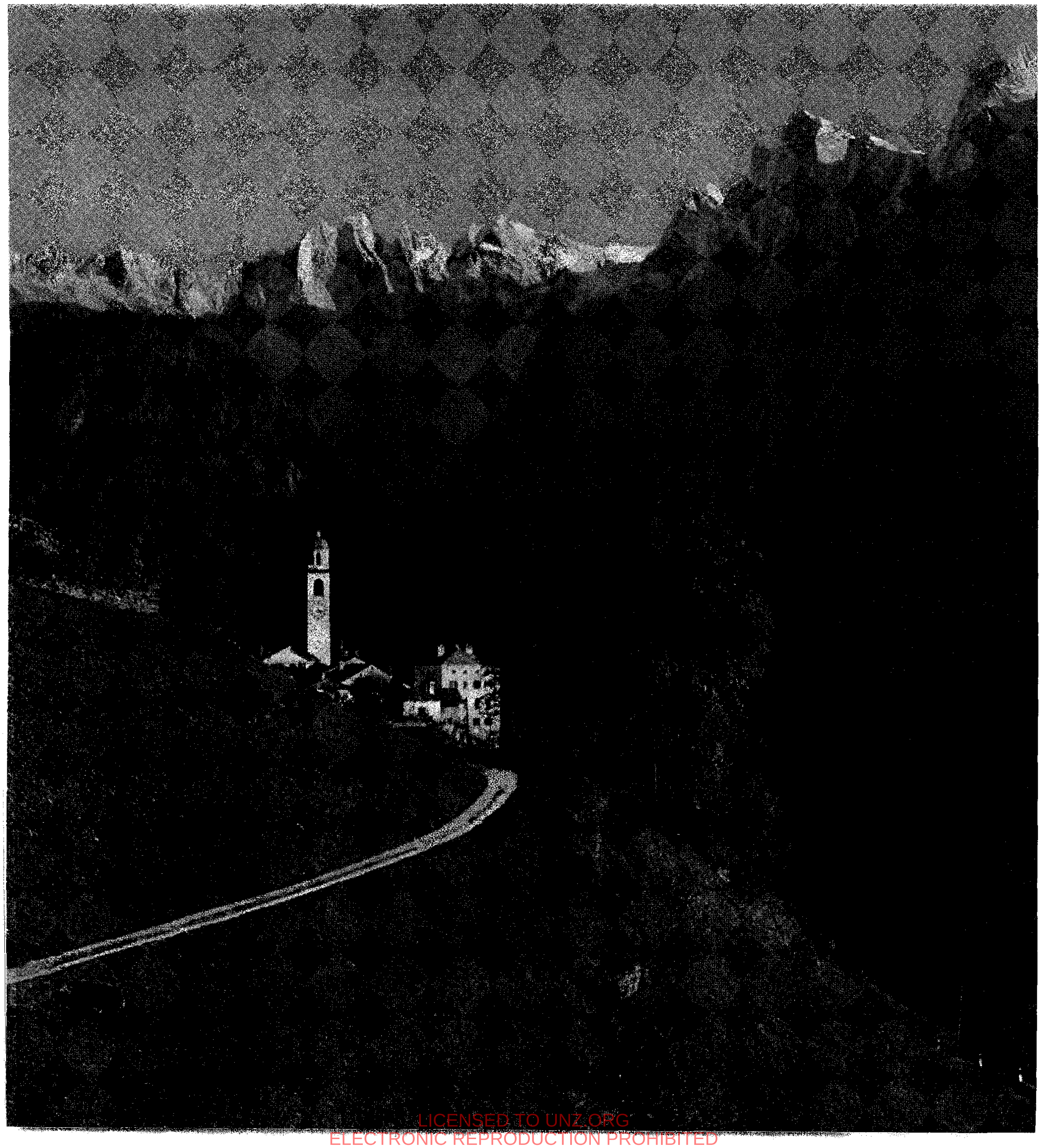
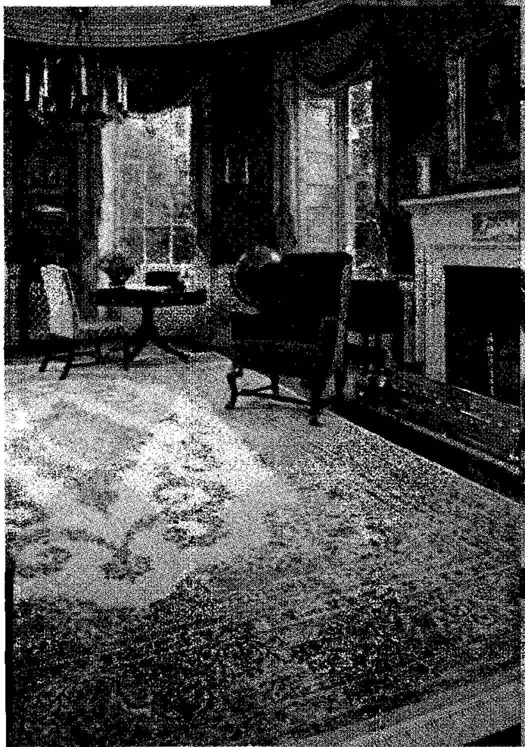


Karastan...in celebration

Design Consultant: Everett Brown Associates/Photography: Tom Yee



This splendid Ivory Kirman design typifies the timeless beauty of Karastan's Oriental design rugs ...always resplendent in pure worsted wools skein-dyed and lustre-washed.

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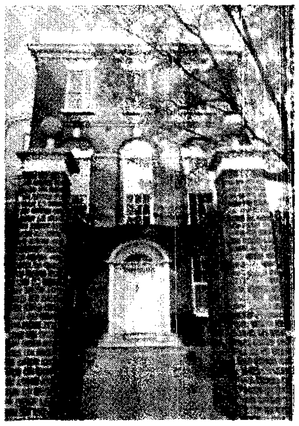
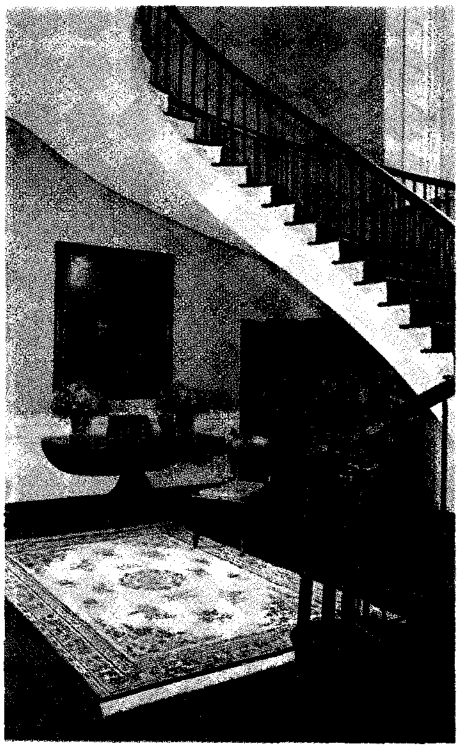


The Nathaniel Russell House Circa 1809 Charleston, South Carolina

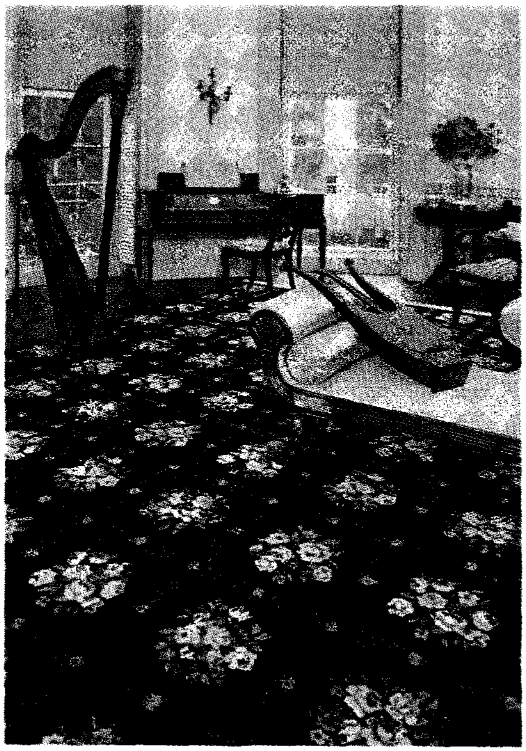
A proud example of post-Colonial architecture, the house is now open to the public.

This historic home hosts *a guest appearance* by Karastan...with a present day collection perfect for an American mood. Treasures from the Orient were prized in those early days, as you will prize Karastan Oriental design rugs today. And the graciousness of that era is captured in broadlooms and rugs inspired by designs from our nation's past. Power-loomed and superbly crafted of pure wool, each bears the Woolmark...your assurance that luxurious beauty, glorious color and unsurpassed quality will endure long into the future.

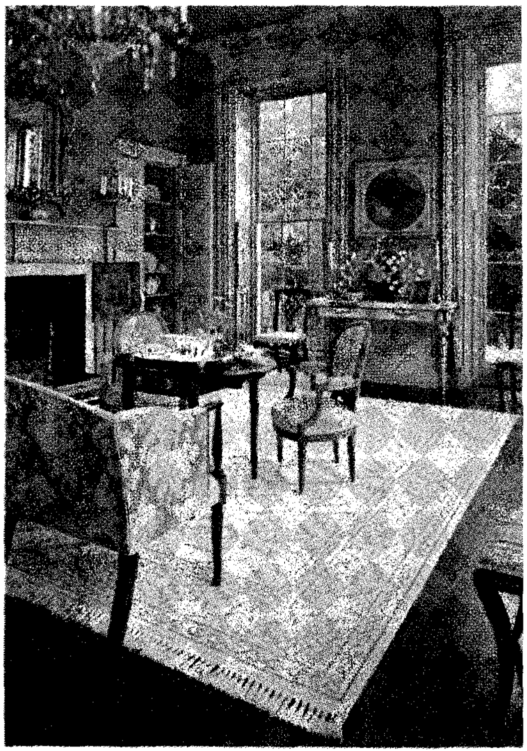


The splendor of Karastan's Chinese Medallion Oriental design rug provides a beautiful counterpoint to a dramatic flying staircase. Woven of pure worsted wool and lustre-washed to an antique finish.

Karastan translates the beauty of a damask pattern into sumptuous "Empereau" broadloom, Kara-loc woven of pure wool yarns for an unmatched feeling of opulence. Available in 19 skein-dyed colors.



The Music Room plays host to a visit from "Yorktown Hall"...an exquisite rose bouquet design woven into a velvet pile of pure wool and available both as broadloom and rugs.



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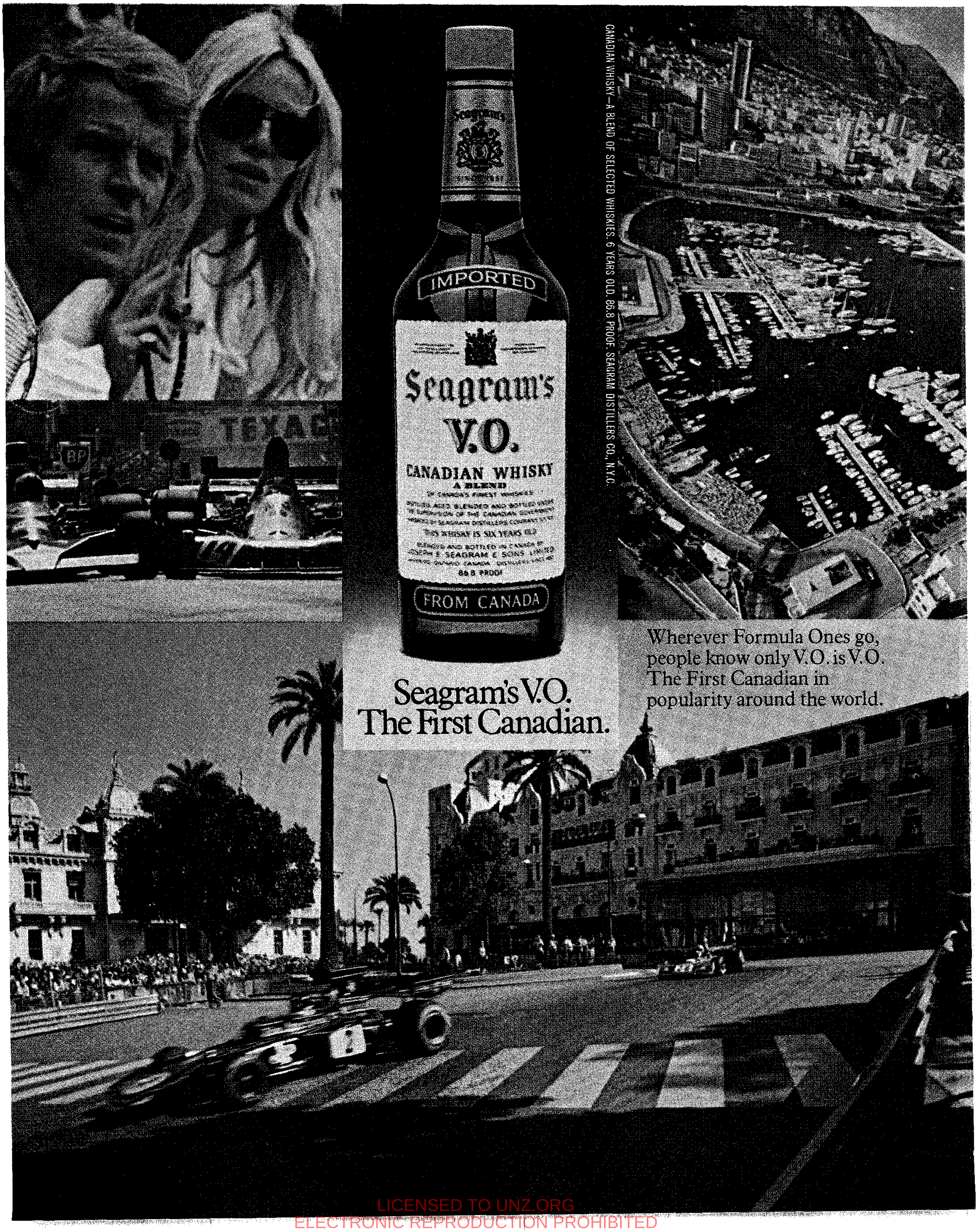
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result of this, we have regained 100% of this business in the State of California at this time.

In other words, the more adverse information collected on citizens, the more insurance-company accounts captured. The theme appears in another company memorandum, also to Retail Credit managers in northern California:

> In our Marketing Meeting we discussed the State Farm [account] specifically and the need to develop more Declinable Information in the Northern California Region.

The areas in which adverse information may be collected on consumers applying for insurance or for employment or for home mortgages include such obvious categories as habitual criminality, chronic drunkenness, and participation in particularly hazardous sports, like skydiving, scuba diving, and mountain climbing. But they also range far from these particular considerations. One Retail Credit checklist for the use of investigators contains this:

> PERSONAL: Describe marital status, domestic life, personal reputation, habits, morals, and type of associates. Careful attention to personal standing in the neighborhood and community; whether popular, well liked or disliked. Describe membership and extent of participation in any civic, social, or fraternal organizations. Cover other leisure time activities.

One paragraph of another consumer-investigation agency's operating manual tells investigators that if the applicant happens to be divorced or separated the investigator "should explain the reason and circumstances" and asks him, in addition, to "describe inside housekeeping." A memorandum for Retail Credit investigators issued in March of 1972 spelled out the company's position concerning details of domestic life. The memorandum stressed:

> We haven't done the job unless we've found out and reported:
> Current marital status—
> If divorced, when, why, whose fault?
> If separated, how long, cause, divorce planned?
> Past and present moral reputation—
> If promiscuous, extent, class of partners?
> If particular affinity, how long, criticized, partner beneficiary?
> If living with partner, how long, children, stable home, criticized, is there living undivorced spouse?
> Possible homosexuality—
> How determined, living together, demonstrates affection for partner in public, dress and/or manner, criticized, associated with opposite sex?

Considering the amount of work imposed on investigators, all this seems difficult for an investigator to come up with through personal visits and face-to-face interviews. Investigators working not only for Retail Credit but for other large consumer-investigation outfits confirm this. An investigator formerly employed by the American Service Bureau wrote to me a while ago about his work. He stated that each investigator at the office he worked in had to complete from fifteen to twenty-five reports a day, and that "a second quota system requires that each inspector produce a certain percentage of cases reflecting adverse information on the credit or insurance applicant." The letter added that a "percentage requirement of reports" involving adverse information "is maintained on a monthly quota system," and went on, "Most significantly, the inspector is to develop information on 'morals' (cohabitation), 'habits' (drinking, drug use), and 'environment' (condition of home, neighborhood)." He went on, "Periodically the company will run competitions among the inspectors for these particular classes of report information," and noted, "This latter set of information is most difficult to obtain legitimately. It would be difficult even if the inspector took the time to visit the neighborhood of the subject, developing sources through neighbors, employers, etc. As the public has developed less and less sympathy for these investigative activities, it would be fair to state that the job is impossible to handle honestly." A result, he informed me, is the compilation of "many fabricated reports."

It seems only fair to emphasize that statements like these need not necessarily be read as meaning that investigators deliberately invent adverse information on consumers. I suspect that most investigators who resort to the shortcuts of zinging, telephoning, and crystal-ball divining do tend to convince themselves that the information they invent is largely of a neutral variety, essentially harmless to the consumer under investigation. And it may well be that in many instances the kind of fabricated information supplied does tend to work in favor of the consumer, as in the case of the middle-class white-collar worker living in a Washington suburb which "looks like a good clean one." If the person who is thus given a clean slate turns out to be a bad insurance risk, the investigator doesn't worry unduly about that. The apparent eventual loser, the insurance company that ordered the investigation, isn't really the ultimate loser on such miscalculated risks, either. It simply passes on the loss to its customers, in the form of higher premiums.

Nevertheless, the pressures on inves-

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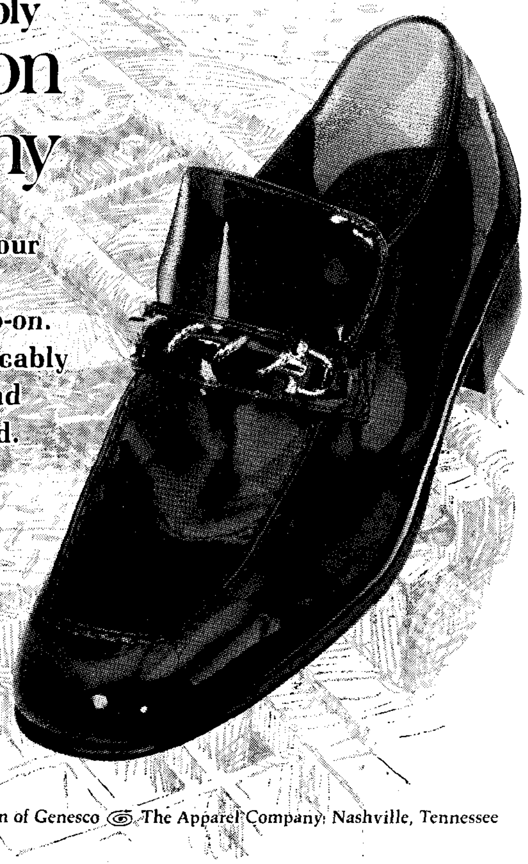
tigators do appear to be such that many of them feel the need to supply a certain percentage of adverse information. One former Retail Credit investigator told the Proxmire subcommittee, "The very existence of the decline requirement made one leave the office each day with the thought in mind: Where can I get enough bad information on at least a couple of reports today to fulfill my decline quota?" He went on, "Frequent meetings were held with the investigator force to instill this requirement in each man. The meetings finally became 'threat sessions' in which we were told that if this decline information was not obtained we would be fired." One young man who worked briefly in the Toronto office of the Hooper-Holmes Bureau, another big consumer-investigation company and Retail Credit's chief competitor, told me that investigators were advised by supervisors at the opening of a business day to "think adverse" while on the job.

Brodie testified concerning tricks that he said investigators were led into. He said that "we were told by other investigators what to do if you didn't attain the proper percentage" of adverse information—"things like leading questions on the telephone, picking up a telephone and talking in a low voice so that the response you got from the person was 'I can't hear you, I can't hear you,' and you could put on the form that the subject was deaf." This is an unusual example of an allegation of outright premeditated fabrication of adverse information, and surely cannot represent company policy. The use of the word "fake," however, is not uncommon among former investigators I have talked with. A woman in a city in upstate New York who used to be a Retail Credit investigator told me not long ago, "I worked for Retail Credit for many years, and I was laid off after I refused to make reports without sufficient time for investigation, to make false statements in them, or to fake reports. I told them many times about it." She said, "If you have a full-time job and you go in at eight o'clock in the morning and pick up twenty-five or thirty cases to finish that day, when are you going to sleep? They know on a local-management level that fakery is going on. When I'd go in and say, 'These things are fake,' they'd say, 'Oh, you're too damn conscientious.' I'd read investigators' reports over. A report would say, 'This fellow is married, has three children, owns his home, he's supposed to be working for X Company,' but I'd find on checking that the man was single, had never



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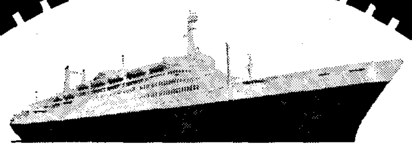

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been married, lived in a rented apartment, and never did work for X Company. Years ago, when I went to work for Retail Credit, they had extremely good training for inspectors. But it's extremely poor now by comparison, and there's a terrific turnover in personnel. We had a lot of part-time workers, like policemen moonlighting—they'd pick up their report forms in the morning but they didn't go around to investigate, they *dreamed* them. The customer is not getting his money's worth. I tried to do my best—I did farm reports, life reports, auto credit, delinquents, skip locates, personnel reports, and, of course, all kinds of insurance reports. Did everything. Near this city there's a community, mostly Germans—they didn't have anything. Not a rug on the floor, very poor. I'd go out there on my rounds. A woman answers the door, and she's always buying everything—encyclopedias, deep freezes, drapes. That's what these poor souls do, you see. Her husband will throw seven or eight credit books at me. I always thought I was doing these poor souls a favor by getting them turned down for credit, so they wouldn't go into debt anymore for encyclopedias and things like that. I would put in the report, 'They're greatly overdrawn.' And yet the banks and finance companies were always talking about extending credit. They were getting on the TV every night—'You don't have to pay till January.' The encyclopedia salesman would come around. And all the children on the floor. 'You want your children to be well educated, don't you?' And how were they ever going to get out of debt? Oh, those encyclopedias—terrible. In the city itself, there are thirty thousand blacks—about fifteen per cent of the population, I'd say. We hired one Negro. He couldn't get any information out of anyone. Those blacks wouldn't talk to a black investigator at all. So we'd use informants—a black undertaker, say." She said that since the passage of the Fair Credit Reporting Act her former employers had got scared about the legal complications involved in adverse information collected on consumers and were attempting to be more careful in handling this type of information.

One device by which some investigators enable themselves to come up with the desired amount of adverse information without actually inventing it appears to be to produce "confirmation" by a second source, often a spurious one, for adverse information that has been supplied. Former investigators testifying before the Proxmire subcom-

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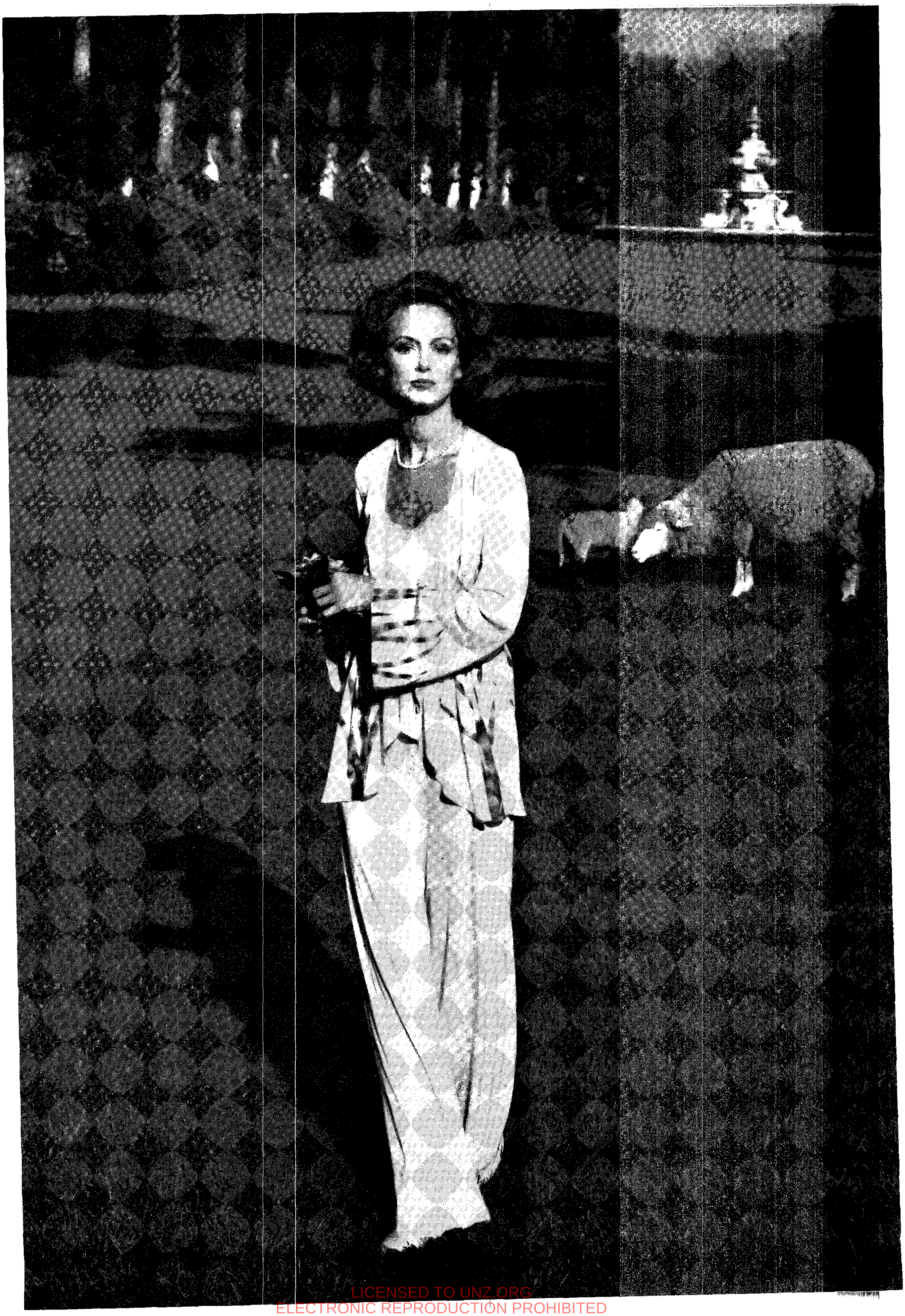

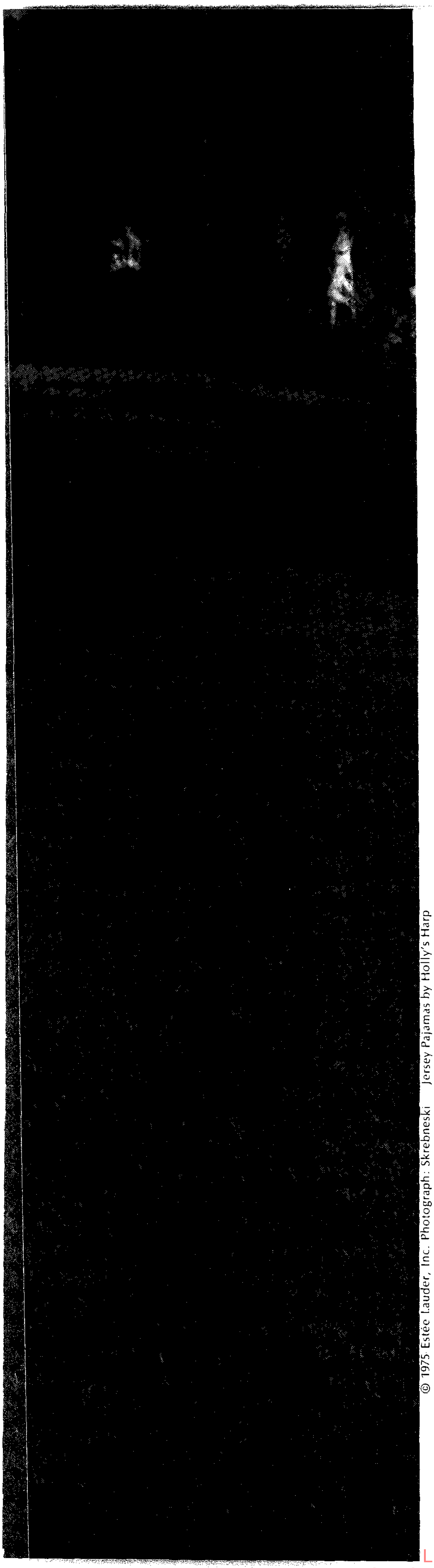

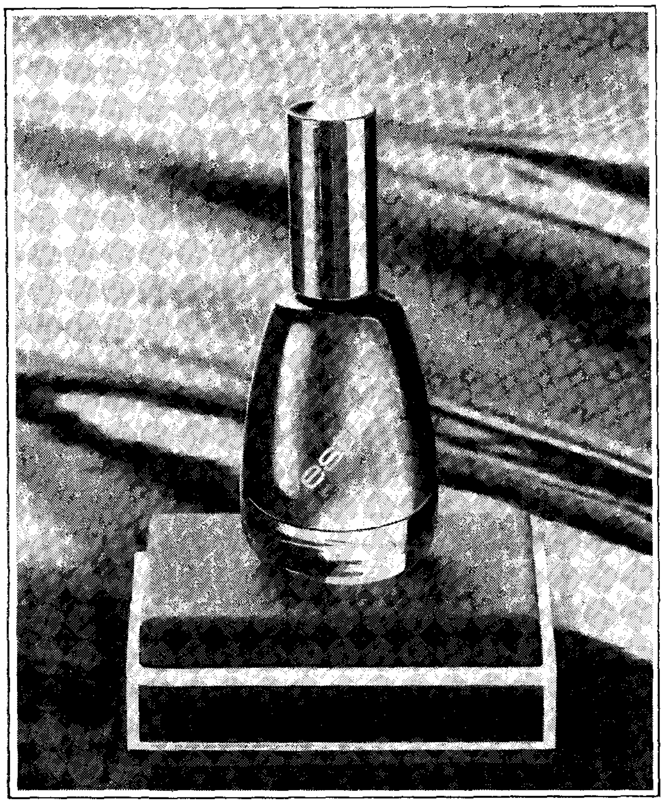

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mittee estimated that in their particular offices adverse information was not confirmed by a second source fifty per cent of the time.

Len Holloway, a former Retail Credit investigator, gave the Proxmire subcommittee an example of what can result from the use of a single source in a report on a consumer:

> I had personal knowledge of an automobile-insurance report that was completely inaccurate and caused the applicant's policy to be denied. The report stated, without qualification, that the subject's neighbors knew her to be a "lady of the evening," that she had visitors come and go very late at night, that she drove fast, and that she was a heavy drinker.
>
> Since her original policy had been turned down, she had been placed in an assigned-risk category, meaning that if she could obtain insurance it would cost considerably more. The request for an assigned-risk report, along with the original report as source material, came to me. The typical procedure would have been to use the original report as one source, contact another source by phone, and copy practically the first report.... However, I decided to thoroughly pursue this report to see how much of this information was true.... When I went to the subject's neighborhood, I talked to no less than ten persons, all of whom held the subject in high respect. All of them also told me that the neighborhood "nut" lived next to her.

Holloway said that he talked to this neighbor, a woman, realizing that she was the source of the adverse information, especially since "she had a similar low opinion of all her neighbors, not just our subject." Holloway indicated that without the unusual effort he happened to make to reinvestigate this case the chances that the subject would be given a clean slate with the insurance company were not bright. "The report was about to be used, and perhaps was, as a source for a future report. It was about to pyramid itself into credibility," he said. Several investigators for various agencies have emphasized to me their disquietude at the manner in which, they say, old information in bureau files is used routinely, without any serious attempt at reinvestigation, as the basis for further reports.

Although Retail Credit supposedly requires periodic destruction of outdated material in its consumer files, former investigators in some branch offices assert that in practice this often is done incompletely. One investigator formerly employed in a California branch office of Retail Credit told me that "a weak effort" was made to comply with this provision of company policy; to purge such outdated information, he said, would require a manual search and winnowing of perhaps half a mil-

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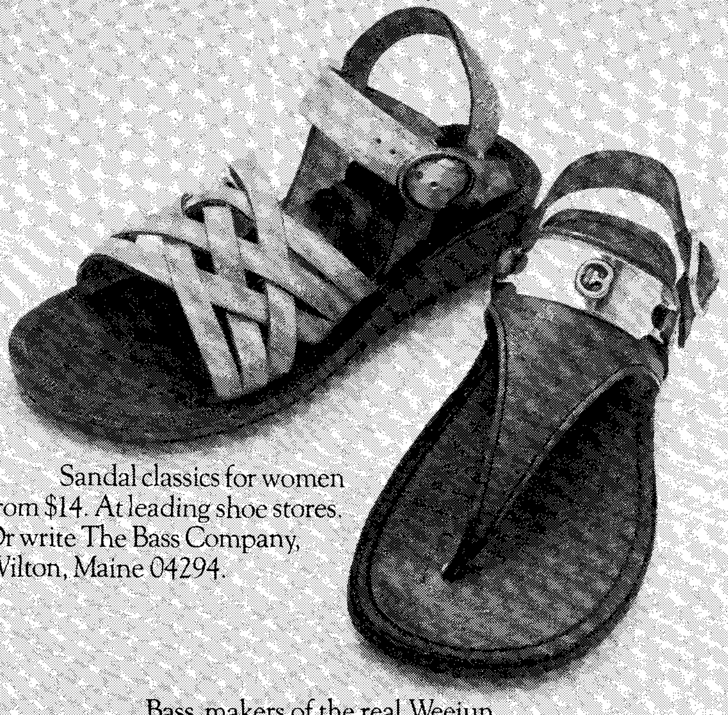

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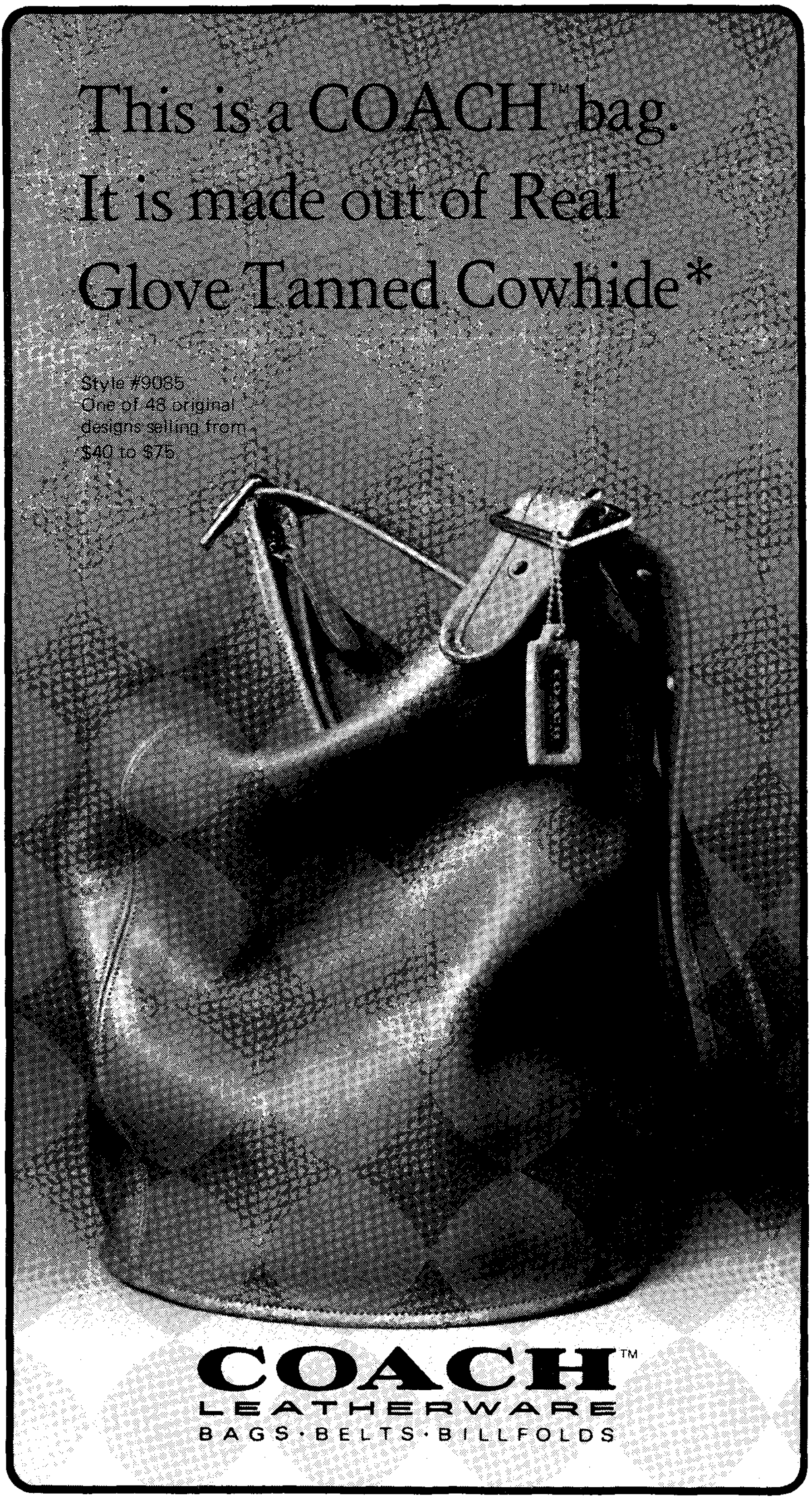
lion consumer files in certain California branch offices alone—a job that, he insisted, investigative staffs, with their work loads, were unlikely to undertake. He also said that when outdated information in the file of a particular consumer *was* destroyed, some of the information was retained, and that "what is kept is adversary information." He said that this information might be reused, after the statutory limit had run out, as part of supposedly new investigations and not only for transactions involving large amounts of money (when under the Fair Credit Reporting Act such use would be permissible).

In the area of adverse information, living together out of wedlock, or even conducting a love affair, is a situation that investigators are to look for and to report on the people concerned. Observations like "this girl is practically living there" appear from time to time in consumer-investigation reports I have seen. Testifying on such "moral" categories as they applied to one woman applicant for insurance, Brodie told the Proxmire subcommittee that "this woman was denied an automobile-insurance policy because her boyfriend spent some hours with her in her apartment." He went on, "This is considered declinable information—either protective or declinable—and many of the investigators need that information to keep up with their percentages, so they will put it on any report." Even if this adverse information is not confirmed by a second source, it can go in the report. One former investigator told me, "A neighbor will say to you about a subject, 'Oh, yes, he has girls running in and out all the time.' There may be no confirmation, but we'll use the unconfirmed information. We'll put it this way in the report: 'One neighbor said that there are girls in and out frequently.' And we'll add, 'This information was not confirmed.' But the insurance company doesn't read the report that way. These 'living arrangements' constitute a declinable situation." Equally unacceptable, apparently, except on a high-risk, high-premium basis, is a woman who has a child out of wedlock. Alleged promiscuity, child or no child, also constitutes a "declinable situation." The very fact that a woman is not married is marked down, according to Brodie, as "protective" information, as is "alien," "college student," and "poor neighborhood." To be "divorced" and living in a "poor neighborhood" is calculable, it appears, as "double protective." An applicant for insurance who happens to be rejected on such "moral" grounds and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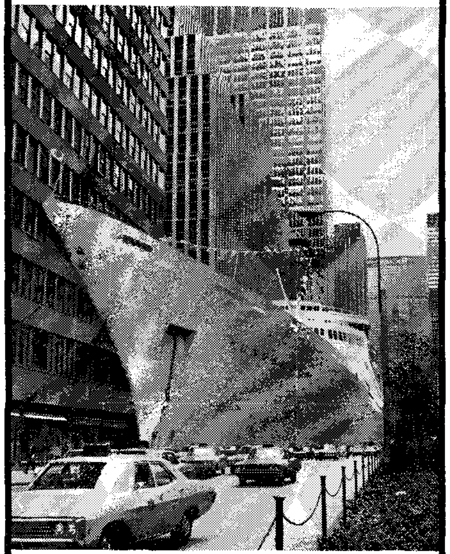

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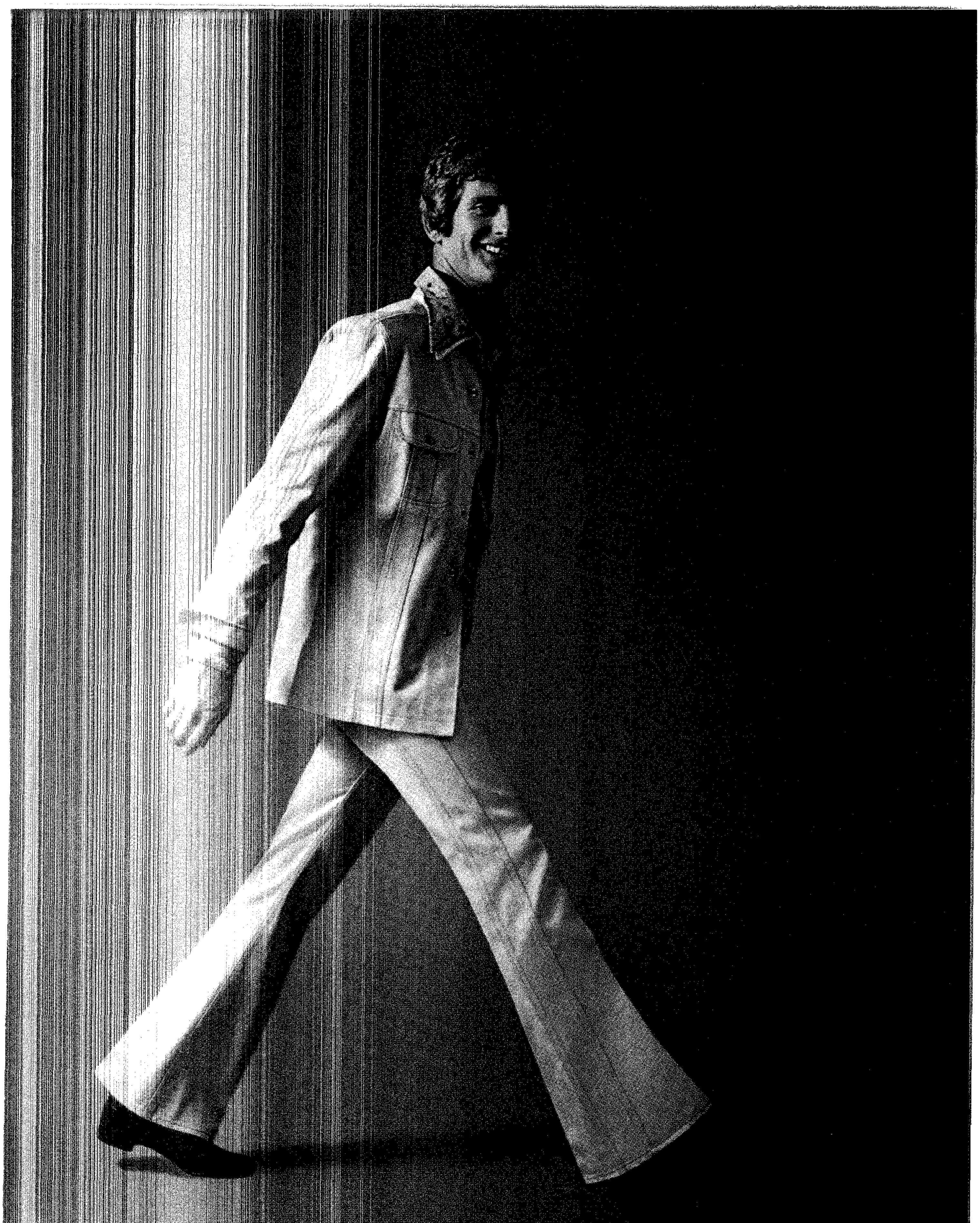
turns to another insurance company to obtain a policy is not likely to fare much better, because the consumer-investigation report is probably still lying in the reporting agency, and when the new insurance company receives the consumer's application it may ask the same agency to make an investigation. What happens then, according to former investigators I have talked with, is not a reinvestigation of the consumer's character and reputation. Instead, the old material in the file, according to the testimony of one investigator, "is just retyped and presented as a new report." And the citizen involved is doubly damned.

A single woman named Beverly Thompson underwent an experience with a consumer-investigation agency which she had not reckoned on when, around the end of June, 1970, she applied in Hartford, Connecticut, where she then lived, for automobile liability insurance with the Casualty and Surety division of Aetna Life and Casualty on a car she owned. (Her resulting legal action is a matter of public record.) There was no indication of any problem at the time. Miss Thompson, who had just moved from Arlington, Virginia, had been driving a car for fifteen years, and she was proud of the fact that she had an accident-free record and had never been ticketed for a moving violation, or even, she liked to say, for a parking violation. In prompt response to her application, Miss Thompson received insurance coverage from Aetna for a twelve-month period beginning that July. That October, however, Aetna notified Miss Thompson that her insurance would not be renewed at the end of the policy term. Taken aback by this news, Miss Thompson tried repeatedly to find out why Aetna would not renew her policy. She had no success. Early in May of 1971 (shortly after the Fair Credit Reporting Act went into effect), Aetna replied to Miss Thompson's entreaties with the statement "There is no requirement to state the reasons for non-renewal and it is our policy not to do so." But the company did inform her that its decision not to renew her policy "was made wholly or partly because of information contained in a consumer report" prepared by the Retail Credit Company.

In mid-May, Miss Thompson went to the Wethersfield office of Retail Credit to find out more about the situation. But, she said subsequently, the Retail Credit people refused to let her have a copy of their report on her, and the "little information" she was given was unenlightening and seemed irrelevant to her insurability. Since Miss Thompson's policy would soon expire, she tried both directly and through agents to obtain auto insurance with a number of other companies, including Allstate, Travelers, Hartford, INA, Lumbermens, American Motorists, Security Insurance, Connecticut Indemnity, and Federal Insurance. She was unable to obtain standard coverage from any of these companies, she said. According to Miss Thompson, representatives or agents of the various companies told her that it was their policy not to issue standard insurance to people whose liability policies another insurance company had declined to renew. She said she was repeatedly told that her only alternative was assigned-risk coverage. As it happened, that was the only kind of coverage she was able to obtain after her Aetna policy expired. Miss Thompson complained to the Connecticut State Insurance Commission, but she was told that the commission had no authority to require Aetna to give her its reasons for not renewing her insurance. Eventually, she was able, under the provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, to pin down the reason she had been rejected for continued standard auto insurance. In the course of legal preliminaries to a civil suit alleging invasion of privacy which she subsequently brought against Retail Credit and also against Aetna and a number of other insurance companies, Miss Thompson obtained a copy of the Retail Credit report on her that Aetna had requested. In the "Former Address" part of the report, a printed heading entitled "Significant Features" had this notation next to it: "Living arrangements at this address." A section of the report noted that in Arlington a "male friend" of Miss Thompson's was said to be "a constant visitor" at her residence and that "he was practically living with the subject." However, the report noted that "no adverse comment was developed about the character of the subject or of her male friend," and it concluded, "Again, it must be repeated that in spite of a belief that they were living together, the subject and her friend enjoyed good personal reputations. No criticisms were received as to personal habits, driving habits, or drinking habits." Thus—to try to consider the report in terms of what investigators have said about their working problems—the investigator responsible for this report seems to have accomplished two things: he emphasized that no de-



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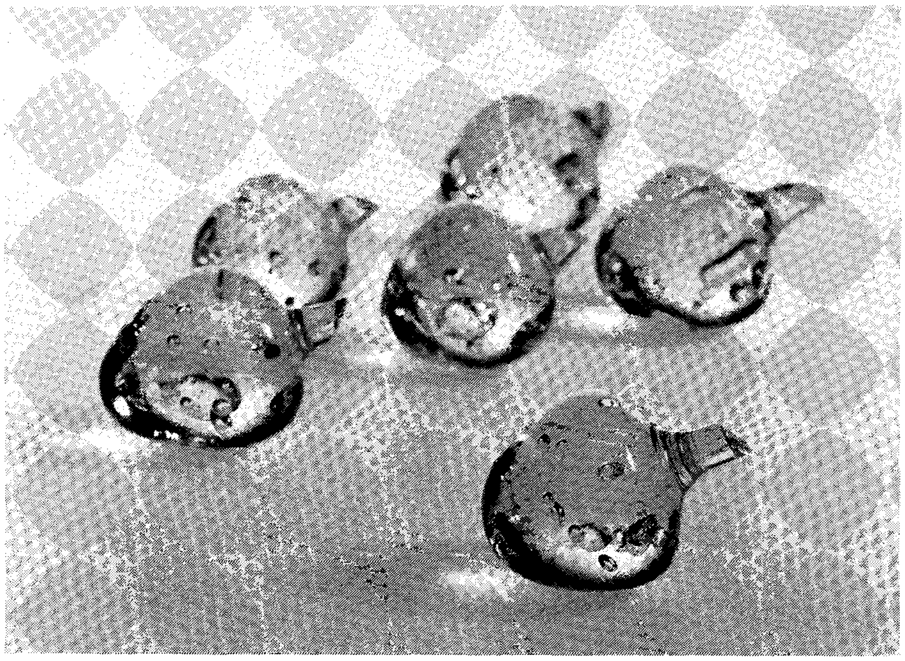
rogatory information on Miss Thompson's personal reputation existed, and at the same time he reported as a "significant feature" that she had "living arrangements," which, according to what other investigators have told me, is a signal that any insurance company is likely to read as an adverse finding. And, on the basis of the "significant feature" reported, the investigator was presumably in a position to add an item to his required "protective" and "declinable" work tally. Miss Thompson's suit is still pending, as are a number of similar suits against Retail Credit and other investigative agencies. Where Miss Thompson's experience is concerned, the one positive outcome so far is that eventually, after expending a vast amount of effort and bringing a lawsuit, she did manage to obtain auto insurance outside the assigned-risk category.

"THE trouble with the Fair Credit Reporting Act is that it's always up to the consumer to correct the problems of a whole system," a former investigator for Retail Credit told me not long ago. He went on, "Suppose you are a poor guy with an eighth-grade education and you apply for insurance and you get a letter saying that your application's declined. You don't know what the hell it's all about, you throw it away and try another insurance company. You don't realize that your throwing away the notice of your right to learn what's in your file means that the adverse information on you could just stay in your file and be used by other insurance companies. And so the poor guy could *never* get insurance except on a high-premium, assigned-risk basis." The consumer has no way of knowing that the existing adverse report on him may be simply retyped and presented as a new report. And if he does go to the reporting agency to find out why his application was turned down, he is not told why. The substance of the report may be read to him, but that may tell him very little without his having a key to the meaning of the company's own notations concerning the "significant features" of his case. Most reporting agencies consider these notations to be their own business and not that of their insurance-industry clients.

Testifying before the Proxmire subcommittee, Lewis Engman, the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, said that the F.T.C. had made an investigation of how well the disclosure provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act were working. "The results of this exercise were very revealing," he said. "We found that there is often wholesale withholding of information concerning character, reputation, or morals." Even when the reporting agency does reveal most of the information in the file, it insists to the consumer whose application was declined that it didn't approve or disapprove an application for insurance or some other service but merely set forth the facts of the case. The agency's commercial customer has a somewhat different story for the consumer. Walter W. Vaughan, a vice-president of the American Security & Trust Company, of Washington, D.C., in expressing before the Proxmire subcommittee the opposition of the American Bankers Association and the Consumer Bankers Association to amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act which would make banks more accountable to consumers applying for credit or mortgages, declared, "We are also opposed to giving the customer a copy of [his] credit report, because we feel if any corrections are to be made they should be given at the source of the information, the credit-reporting agency." He went on, "The duty of explaining the information contained in the consumer report is a proper function of the credit-reporting agency furnishing the report. If a consumer disputes information in the report . . . there is precious little [a bank] could do to explain the error to the satisfaction of the consumer. At best, we could only hope to be able to retain a cordial relationship. . . . My bank uses a form letter on all cases where we cannot personally discuss the decision to decline."

Bewildered by what has befallen him, a consumer whose application is thus declined may shuttle back and forth between the reporting agency and the insurance company, the bank, or some other commercial customer, always being referred from one to the other. Getting a straight answer is far from easy. Step No. 4 of a set of instructions headed "What to Do When the Consumer Knocks" and issued by Retail Credit to its employees tells them, "*Inform consumer that you do not keep files* in your office, but that you will forward his comments and request for assistance to your Manager. (Even though you may have made the report in question, do not involve yourself personally in a discussion of that point. If you interviewed the consumer and he recalls that fact, and presses for your disclosure of what you said in the report on him, simply tell the consumer that you do not recall the details of the



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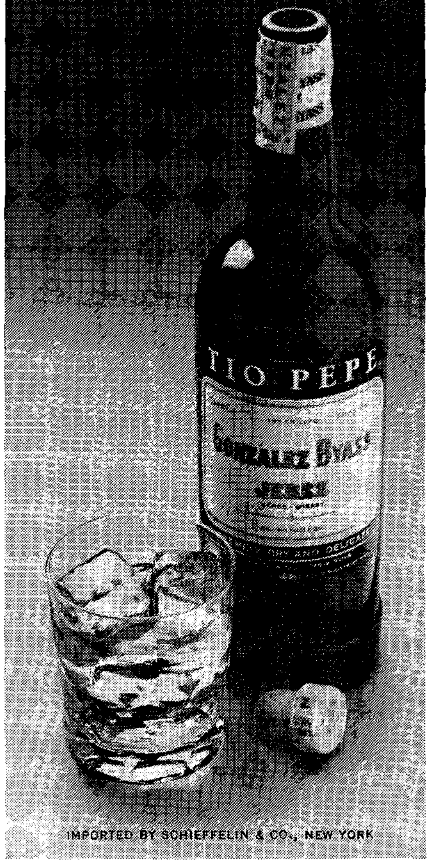

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report and it would not be fair to him for you to talk from memory.)"

If the reputation and the economic standing of individual consumers may be damaged by erroneous or unconfirmed information put into credit reports, this does not necessarily hold true for certain institutions. When the Retail Credit Company was taxed in hearings before Senator Philip Hart's Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee for routinely using hearsay evidence that might be damaging to consumers, Robert W. Biccum, general attorney for the company, defended its position with the remark "What's wrong with hearsay? We all operate on hearsay every day. We couldn't have a civilized society without hearsay." The company's formal standards for certain institutions appear to be less permissive about the use of hearsay, however. Retail Credit's "Field Representative Manual" warns investigators, under a paragraph headed "Reporting on Banks," to tread carefully:

> The laws of a number of states in the United States classify as a misdemeanor the act of anyone who slanders or libels a bank. Such laws do not prevent us from reporting on banks, but our handling should reflect an awareness of the laws and of the special circumstances that apply.

Investigators are instructed in reporting on banks to "make no outside inquiry about financial status or business standing," and are told concerning their preparation of such reports, "Do not comment on business standing or reputation." Had Beverly Thompson been a bank rather than a single woman with a spotless driving record, her Aetna insurance policy would undoubtedly still be in force. Policemen seem to be as carefully protected from hearsay as banks. The same Retail Credit manual warns investigators to "be careful of reflecting on the honesty of a law-enforcement officer by statements such as 'he was arrested but because of his influence the police let him off.' "

One striking aspect of the consumer-investigation industry is a kind of freemasonry and quiet mutual aid that seems to have long prevailed among the industry, its commercial customers, and certain law-enforcement and government agencies. According to W. Lee Burge, president of Retail Credit, testifying before a special subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations in 1968, "A number of agencies, such as the Agency for International Development, Civil Service Commission, Federal Housing Administration, and Veterans Administration, have established arrangements with our company substantially like those which we have with our nongovernment customers. We furnish reports to those agencies of the same nature as those furnished to our nongovernment customers . . . In addition, Retail Credit Company for many years has coöperated with such investigative agencies of the United States government as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service by making available to authorized representatives of such agencies information which may be in our files." The F.B.I., like other government agencies, is prohibited by the Fair Credit Reporting Act from obtaining information on citizens from credit- and consumer-investigation agencies for law-enforcement purposes, and although the Civil Service Commission is not prohibited from using such information concerning applicants for federal jobs, the commission apparently is not currently drawing upon the files of consumer-investigation agencies for such information. But the act does not close all the loopholes that make it possible for various government agencies, including the F.B.I., to obtain information indirectly, since they still have access to Civil Service Commission personnel reports based in part on raw information that may have already been extracted from these same files.

The traffic in information on citizens where government is concerned has not been only one way, it seems. Last November, then Attorney General William Saxbe and the director of the F.B.I., Clarence M. Kelley, jointly released a report on the details of counterintelligence programs conducted by the F.B.I. between 1956 and 1971 against organizations and individuals considered "subversive or disruptive." According to the Justice Department report, the people engaged in this F.B.I. program undertook a variety of disruptive and "disinformation" activities against these groups and people, and the acts included "notifying credit bureaus, creditors, employers and prospective employers of members' illegal, immoral, radical, and Communist Party activities in order to affect adversely their credit standing or employment status." Although the program was said to have been ended in 1971, the adverse information on the citizens subject to these acts of undercover government harassment is presumably still lying in company files,

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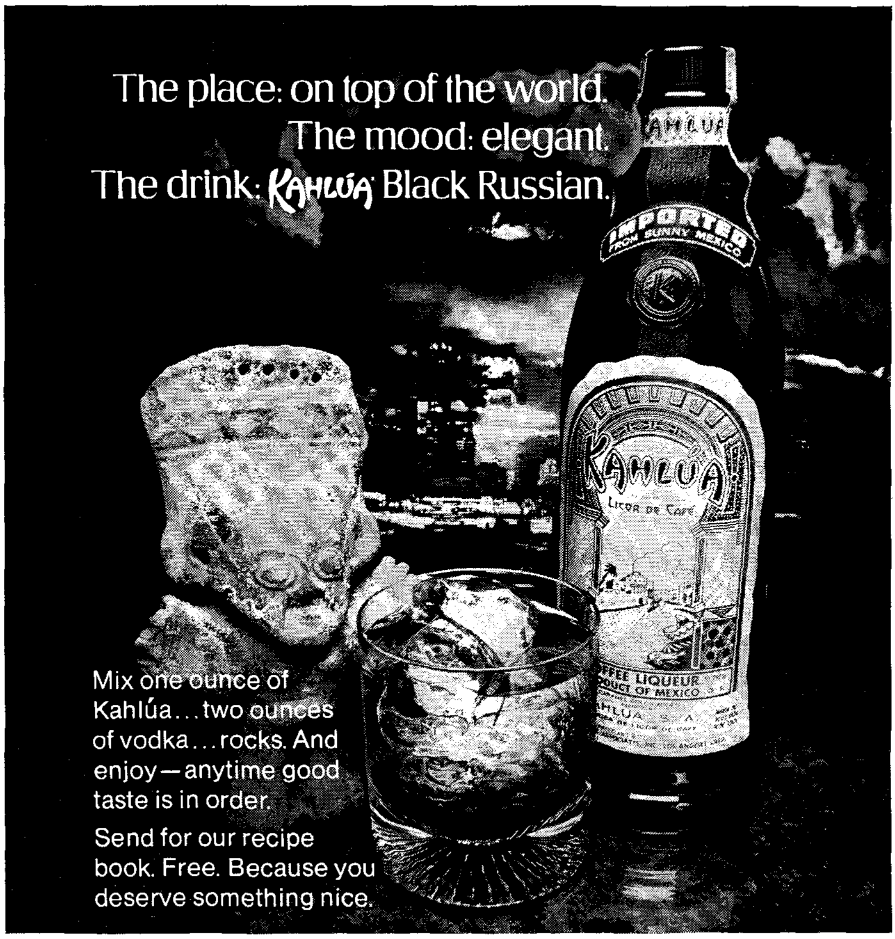
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and the people involved are presumably still subject to having their life, health, or car insurance terminated or put into a high-premium category by commercial customers of reporting agencies that received this information.

A WHILE ago, I visited the national headquarters of the Retail Credit Company, in Atlanta, to find out how the management views the problems it has to contend with—problems that include not only amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act proposed in August of 1973 by Senator Proxmire (which he intends to reintroduce in the present Congress) but also a lawsuit that has been brought against Retail Credit by the Federal Trade Commission charging a number of improper trade practices, among them that Retail Credit investigators in the course of interviews have misrepresented their true identity and mission, and that the company has imposed quotas on investigators for adverse information about consumers under inquiry. (The trial of this case, before an administrative-law judge of the Federal Trade Commission, is pending.) The national headquarters of Retail Credit are in a big, blocklike building of several stories which lies some distance from downtown Atlanta. A company P.R. man had arranged for me to visit the president, W. Lee Burge. I had been supplied with lots of elaborately printed company literature, such as the Retail Credit 1973 annual report and the texts of various statements and speeches by the company's chief officer ("The Free Flow of Business Information—Key to Our Credit Economy"). Before I was taken to meet the president, the P.R. man, who told me that he himself had started out with the company as an investigator, discussed some of the business questions that he said the company was attempting to help answer through its investigative work. "At any one time, we'll have information on about twenty-five per cent of a community," he began. "We are not going to report information that we think unethical—if you want a report on a prospective son-in-law, we *won't* give you such a report." He went on to give examples of Retail Credit inquiries: "If you're buying a million-dollar home, why are you engaging in such a big transaction? Are you likely to live up to the responsibilities involved? If you're buying a million-dollar life-insurance policy, why? Are you contemplating suicide? That *is* a credit risk. We want to know about your state of health. About your avocations—a lot of people sky-dive or scuba-dive. How about drinking? Personal conduct? If you are married and have three mistresses on the side, you are raising some life hazards. Your wife can shoot you, or your mistress—it does happen, you know. If through your personal dealings you are a disliked person, that can have an effect on your mortality. The insurance people need that information to assess their risk properly."

When I met the president in his office, I found him to be a rather thickset man with dark hair and conservatively dressed. A prominent feature of his office was an oversize set of scales—not real brass scales but a wooden replica that appeared to have been sprayed with gilt-flecked paint, and whose left- and right-hand pans, which were level with each other and evidently represented an ideal of evenhanded judiciousness, were laden with some sort of artificial greenery. The scales were set amid bookshelves of elaborately bound volumes with such titles as "A Tale of Two Cities." I thanked the company president for receiving me, remarked that Retail Credit seemed to have been under criticism lately from members of the Senate Consumer Credit Subcommittee, from the F.T.C., and from other quarters, and asked him what, in his opinion, these criticisms amounted to.

Burge said that the American public in general was sensitive to the question of privacy—and, in his opinion, rightly so. "We at Retail Credit regard ourselves as the protectors of privacy rather than the invaders of privacy," he declared. "We're not personally interested either in people's reputation or in their habits. These are not items of curiosity to us or to the clients to whom we report. It's more a question of whether a person's habits affect his insurability or his risk as an employee. Would he, by virtue of his habits, be a poor risk as, for example, a driver of an automobile? It's not a matter of curiosity to us—it's purely and simply a question of whether he is a standard or preferred or substandard risk for the service he has applied for. The insurance companies reserve the right to select their clientele and to charge according to their selection. So this investigative process is really one that allows business to broaden its scope, from a marketing standpoint. The whole purpose of the information-gathering process is to do business according to a fair and equitable arrangement. The

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reason we've come under criticism is really a lack of public understanding. Many people have feared what we do largely because of technological advances—the use of computerized information, and so on. This computer fear is almost a psychosis. American civilization, our total society, is based on a premise of knowledge and freedom of information—the right to know. What's involved in our business is the question of striking the proper balance between the right to know and the right to privacy. We feel that the businessman has a right to know whatever factors may be pertinent to the transactions he is considering. These are the rules of the road that we in this company have followed for the seventy-five years of our existence, and now some of the rules are under question."

I asked Burge whether he thought that the Fair Credit Reporting Act as it now stands, without the amendments proposed by Senator Proxmire, was a sufficient remedy for whatever regulatory problems might be involved in the credit-reporting industry.

Burge replied that he considered the present act quite adequate. In any event, he said, for the last several months Retail Credit had actually gone beyond the formal requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act and was now, upon request, "allowing the consumer visual disclosure" of any company report on him.

I asked Burge why the company didn't go still further and give the consumer a copy of the report, so that he could study it at his leisure.

"We do not feel that giving the consumer a copy of the report is an appropriate remedy," Burge said. "An oral discussion of the report with the consumer is more private, and is more adequate to educate the consumer about what the real problems are. The unsophisticated consumer, particularly, needs this discussion. If we were to just mail him a copy, that would be a cop-out, because then he might be left in the dark as to why he didn't get his transaction. Reports are frequently in some kind of code or terminology that's foreign to the consumer. Unless he can have someone counsel him, he doesn't really achieve his objective of understanding why he was not able to acquire the service he applied for."

Burge told me that mailing a consumer a copy of the report on him would present a problem other than the loss of friendly advice: "There's an additional problem, and that's the loss of confidentiality through mailing a report. If the report falls into the hands of members of the consumer's family or business associates, the consumer may have his record exposed, when the objective is to maintain privacy. Suppose the consumer's spouse learns of either financial or personal difficulties previously unknown—past domestic difficulties or heavy indebtedness. Maybe even health problems. So mailing the report might expose other members of the family to a lot of difficulties. As things are now, we're performing a counselling service in our handling of consumer-credit and insurance matters. We can help the consumer who comes to us. We might say, 'Why don't you go to your insurance agent, who'll direct you to another company?' " Burge said that Retail Credit had had some seven hundred thousand interviews with consumers since the passage of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, and that legitimate consumer complaints about investigative reports were remarkably few—"between three one-thousandths and five one-thousandths of one per cent of the number of all investigations we have undertaken." He characterized the current F.T.C. charges against Retail Credit as "totally unjustified." Of the unfavorable statements made by various former company investigators before the Proxmire subcommittee, Burge observed, "We don't say that some of our ex-employees haven't failed to live up to all our practices and policies—as a matter of fact, that's why they are ex-employees." Concerning allegations of the existence of a quota system among Retail Credit investigators for adverse information on consumers, he denied these without qualification.

I asked Burge if he would care to elaborate on the question of "moral risk" that seems to crop up so often in consumer-investigation reports.

"We do not seek to investigate a person's habits or morals per se—we simply seek to develop information that would be likely to affect a particular transaction between an insurance company or other customer and the consumer," Burge replied. "It's up to the underwriter to determine whether he wants to accept the risk that may be involved. Let's deal with morals. Suppose that in connection with a single young lady's application for auto insurance we find that the young lady is living with a young man. The young man may drive her auto, and we feel that the insurance company has a right to know that this single young

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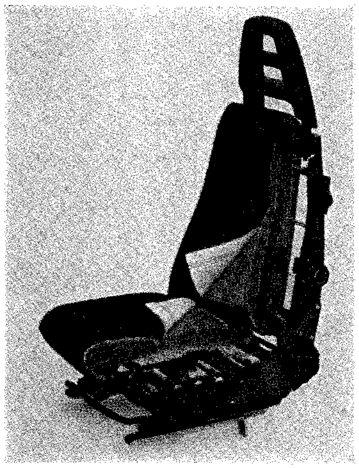

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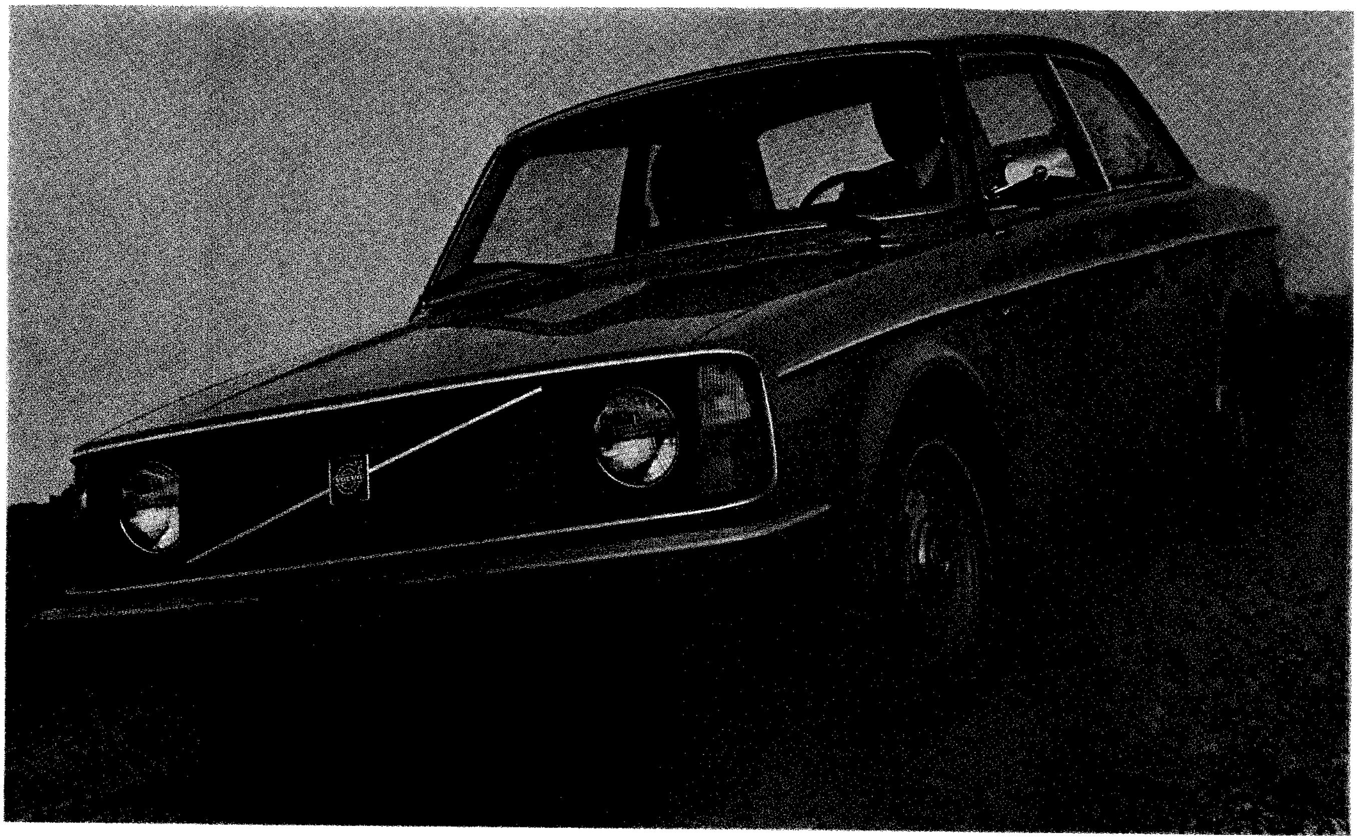

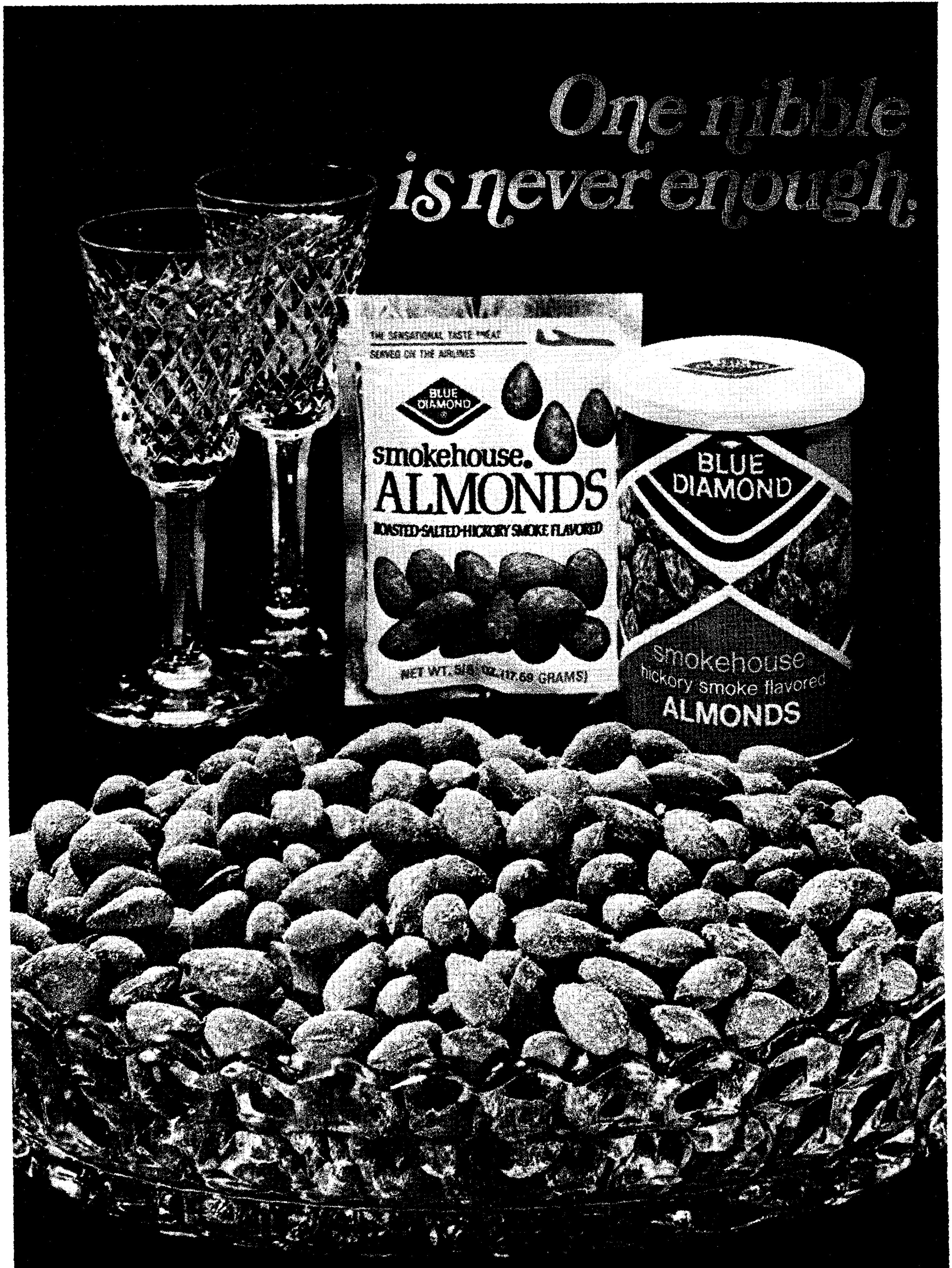
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lady has a relationship with a man. There can also be financial effects of this relationship. Suppose the young lady has applied for a home mortgage, and suppose that the relationship between her and the young man is a temporary one. That's of interest to our customer. It's not that we are critical of people who have this relationship because of moral considerations. It's just that past business experience of decision-makers with people having this sort of relationship is not as satisfactory as with people who have stable relationships. Does the businessman have a right to be informed of this risk when he's making his business decision? Again, it's a question of the right to know."

As I left the Retail Credit headquarters, I passed a large room, with a glass-paned door that was protected by all sorts of locks and special buzzers, on an upper floor of the building—the room where ledger credit files were kept. (The company's investigative files, which are arranged manually, are not centralized in its headquarters building but are kept in various branch offices.) The file room, lighted by overhead fluorescent bulbs, was filled with computers, tape reels making intermittent jerky starts and stops, and rows of storage-and-retrieval discs that whirled at high speed within large plastic-domed drums that had the appearance of rows of translucent automobile oil filters. They contained the credit histories of about nineteen million people—including, I supposed, my own. Nineteen million histories, all whirling in electronic centrifuges, to be spun off on command. Looking at them, I could not help thinking of the vast network with which I knew these drums to be interlocked. I thought of similar interlocking credit systems throughout the country, and of the innumerable corporate links involved—with finance companies, banks, trade associations, department stores, airlines, big hotels, and credit-card networks—and of the huge amount of transactional information, easily translatable into major elements of day-to-day personal diaries, retrievable from rooms such as this.

IT seems to me that many of the questions raised about the consumer-investigation business inevitably point to the policies and practices not only of a large organization such as the Retail Credit Company but also of its corporate customers, and in particular of the insurance companies that employ the services of the consumer-investiga-

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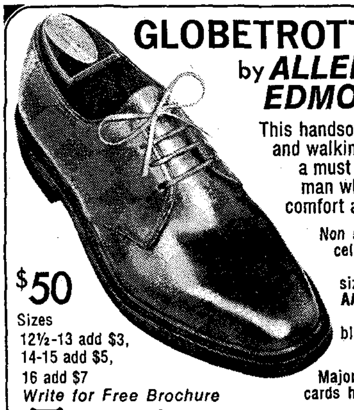

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tion agencies. One reason that nearly all the big insurance companies have been using reporting agencies like Retail Credit through the years is not the companies' own inability to estimate the reliability of applicants for insurance through direct contact with them but a reluctance to interfere with the prerogatives of the insurance agents representing the companies. Most insurance agents are independent contractors, and particular insurance companies try to cater to their wants pretty much as particular airlines try to cater to the wants of independent travel agents. The insurance agent gets his living from his commissions on the sale of policies to consumers, and because of this his interests tend to diverge from those of the insurance company. If an insurance agent reports to an insurance company that a customer he has been selling an insurance policy to looks like a poor risk, the agent is likely to lose his sale. The insurance agent, then, tends to look favorably on his customer's insurability. He has a proprietary interest in him as a long-term customer, and hopes to sell him ever more insurance—and derive more commissions therefrom—as the years go by. In effect, the first risk that the insurance companies consider is not the customer himself but the insurance agent. They have less than full trust in his veracity concerning the insurability of the consumer. Hence the use by the insurance companies of outside consumer-investigation agencies, of which, over the years, Retail Credit has become the largest. (Retail Credit began at the end of the last century as a small credit-reporting service for local merchants in Atlanta.) And it appears that, just as the insurance agent has always displayed a tendency to find his prospects eminently insurable, the consumer-investigation agencies, to strengthen their business relationship with the insurance companies, have developed an interest in collecting adverse information about consumers. "'Declinable' information—oh, yes, that was part of their sales pitch to us," an insurance-company executive who has had many dealings with the Retail Credit people said to me a while ago. He added, "And they would do things like sending us follow-ups—newspaper accounts of individuals convicted of drunken driving, et cetera."

Sales pitches or no sales pitches, however, the standards for personal character and reputation have not been established primarily by Retail Credit and other such agencies. Basically,

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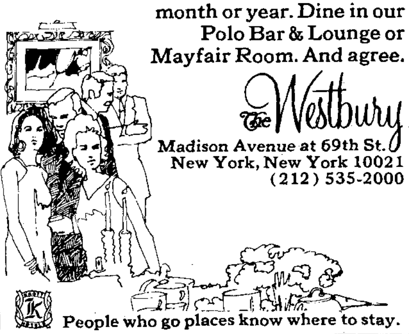

they have been established over many decades by the insurance industry itself. And on the whole it is the insurance companies that originated and have kept up the demand for the collection of such information on consumers. One investigator for Retail Credit told me not long ago, "I think that if we didn't report 'moral risk' information most of the insurance companies who are our clients would stop using the Retail Credit investigation service." It seems almost impossible to consider the social problems created by the consumer-investigation industry without being directed toward the standards of the insurance underwriters. These standards, to hear people in the insurance industry talk, exist entirely for actuarial reasons, and they point to the enormous complexity of making their calculations and at the same time competing vigorously for the business of the consumer in a system of free enterprise and free choice. When one discusses the standards of the industry with people in the insurance business, it is brought home to one that there is a sort of underwriters' mystique that plays a concealed but vital role in the industry—that underwriting is a specialized profession involving not only complicated mathematical interpretations of the laws of probability but also certain uncanny intuitions and a subtle yet firmly realistic grasp of the constancy and vagaries of human nature. Within the insurance industry, there are indeed a number of highly intelligent, and even brilliant, people with a formidable theoretical and practical grasp of the application of the laws of probability, and perhaps this fact has contributed to the widespread assumption—certainly not discouraged by the industry—that the underwriting profession is an arcane science and art, whose intricacies are beyond the comprehension of most laymen. As far as I am concerned, however, the existence of this assumption tends to make the underwriting profession subject to a larger and far simpler actuarial reality—that once a profession develops such a strong mystique that its practices are considered to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals, it is almost a certainty that something is going drastically wrong within that profession.

The plain fact seems to be that the standards according to which the so-called moral risks, or vagaries of life style, or "living arrangements" are reported by such organizations as Retail Credit have their basis less in legitimate actuarial considerations than

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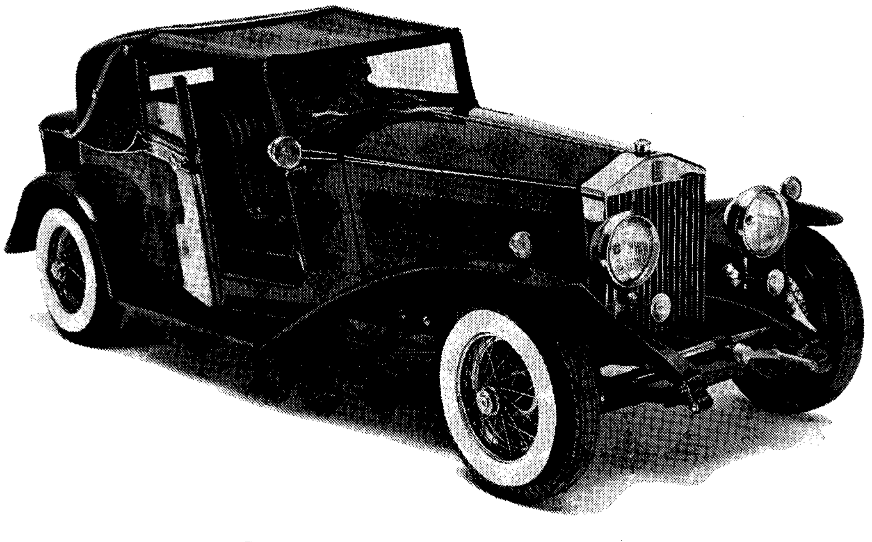

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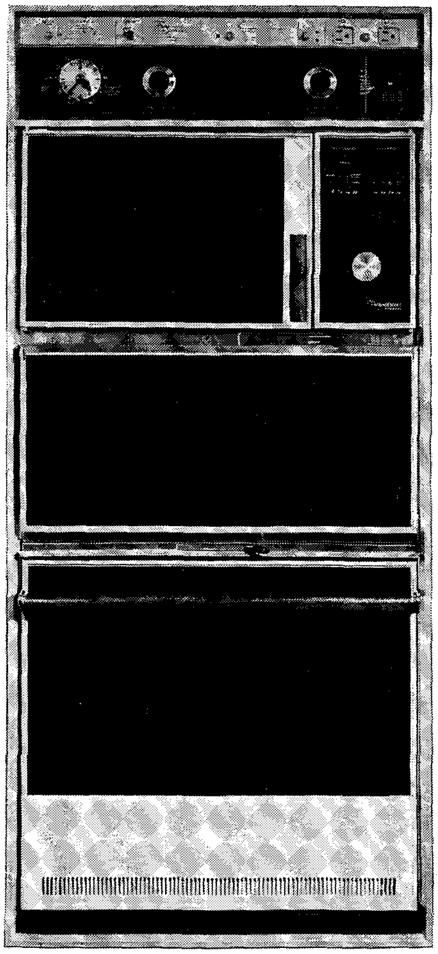

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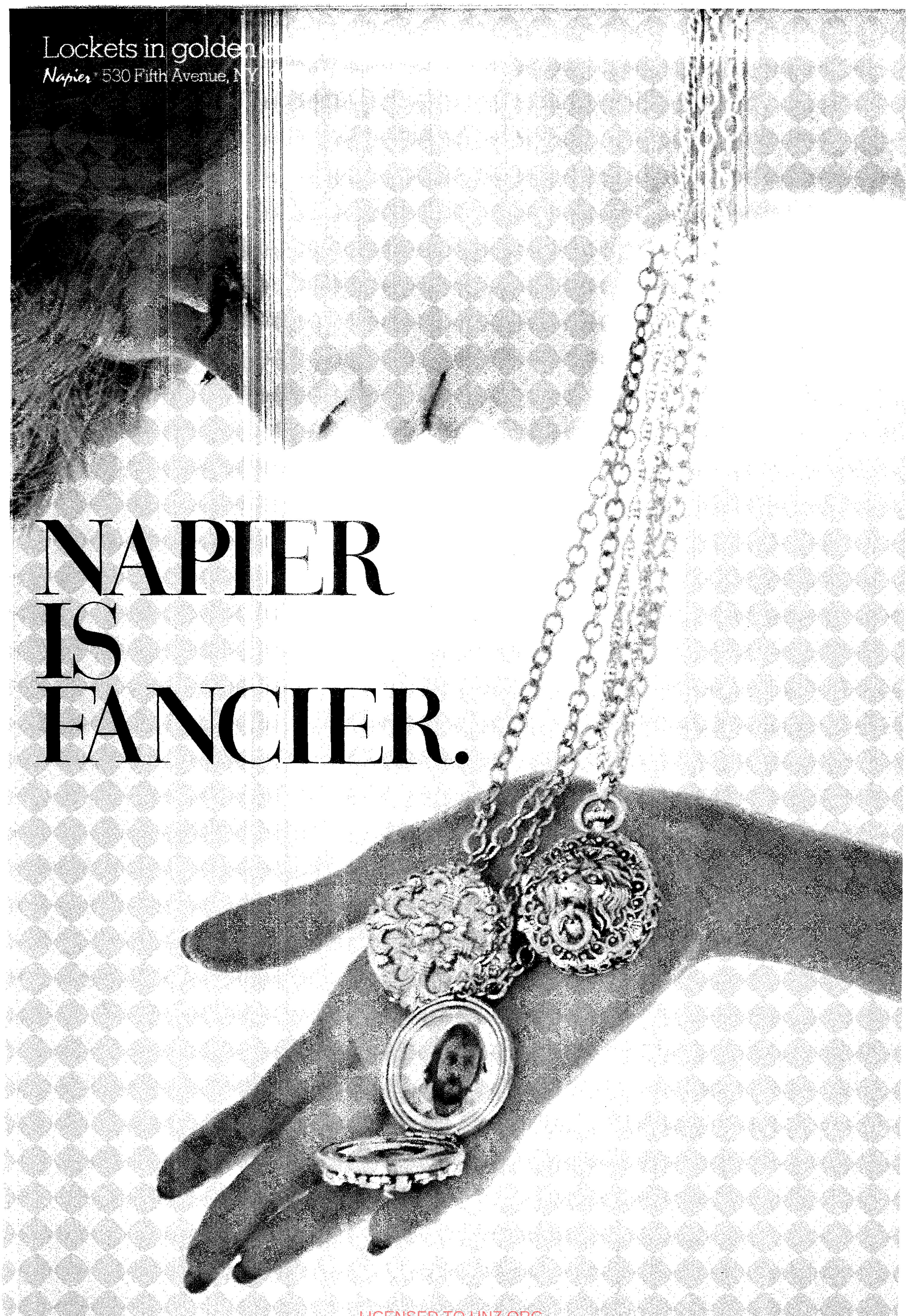
in strong social prejudices held within the insurance-underwriting profession. And even many of the actuarial considerations that insurance underwriters are fond of citing as fundamental doctrine are of questionable validity. To take one example: nearly everyone has had—or has a friend who has had—his car scraped in one or two minor accidents in which no one was hurt, such as skidding on an icy road and sliding into a guardrail, only to find, after his repair bills have been settled with his insurance company, that his auto-insurance premium has been raised. The position of the underwriters is that in thus raising the premium the insurance company is merely responding to an increased actuarial risk concerning the owner of the car, for they regard that risk as part of a spectrum of risks, at the end of which lies damage caused by chronically drunken and other egregiously dangerous drivers—the sort of drivers whom the insurance-industry public-relations people are fond of referring to in making such statements as that "six per cent of all drivers account for forty-five per cent of the accidents on the road." The rationale of the insurance underwriters appears to be that through the services of consumer-investigation agencies they are able to predict, from reports on the life style and general behavior—including accident histories—of individual citizens under investigation, the long-term relative insurance risks represented by these citizens. However, a report on driver behavior and accident involvement published by the United States Department of Transportation in 1970 characterizes such conclusions as these as "grossly misleading." One study cited by the report found, for example, that in a representative group of drivers whose driving records were subjected to close analysis "the 'normal driver' constituted 98.7 per cent of the driver group studied and caused 96.3 per cent of the accidents" studied. The report continued, "The studies reviewed seem to indicate that most drivers commit errors regularly. These drivers are deviant only in that they depart from ideal or optimum behavior. Deviant drivers . . . do exist, but they are few in number in comparison with the average drivers who commit most of the errors and become involved in most of the crashes." It asserted, further, "Examination of even several years of accident data fails to provide a representative picture of the fraction of drivers involved in accidents. The observed fraction is only slightly lower than one would expect if no difference among drivers existed, and it is easily explained without assuming the existence of a small group of chronic accident repeaters."

The report also dealt with the attempts of insurance companies to endow information they obtain on certain drivers with significant predictive value as to those drivers' future conduct on the road. "Efforts to identify high-risk drivers using various physiological and psychological factors as well as accident records are plagued with a 'false positive' problem," it noted. "That is, characteristics may be identified that are common to most of the drivers with the highest risk; however, many drivers who are not high risks also have the characteristics and are incorrectly classified. . . . The vast majority of accidents involve that large group of drivers with low accident likelihoods—drivers who, over their lifetime, will be involved in no more than a handful of state-reportable accidents." Yet the insurance companies continue to cast aside persons whom they consider to pose not only high risks but almost any risk at all. ("The underwriters' idea of a good risk is fire insurance on pig iron lying under water," a congressional staff counsel familiar with the insurance industry commented a while ago.) And it is in pursuit of minimum risks to the industry that the citizen, who in a state such as New York must show a certificate of insurance in order to register his car, is compelled to give the insurance company carte blanche, through the personal investigation it orders made on him, to intrude into his private life and to sit in judgment on his or her acceptability and reliability.

An indication of the sources giving rise to the current standards of these invisible arbiters can be gathered from some insurance-company documents that have turned up in the last few years during congressional investigations of the industry. One might begin by looking at some of the standards that are known to have been set by underwriters regarding the relationship of the citizen's occupation to his insurability as a driver. (In doing so, one can disregard obvious high-risk occupations, such as stunt-driving, that would be of concern to any underwriter.) According to some twenty separate lists that were obtained from underwriters' manuals by Senator Philip Hart's Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee prior to hearings on the in-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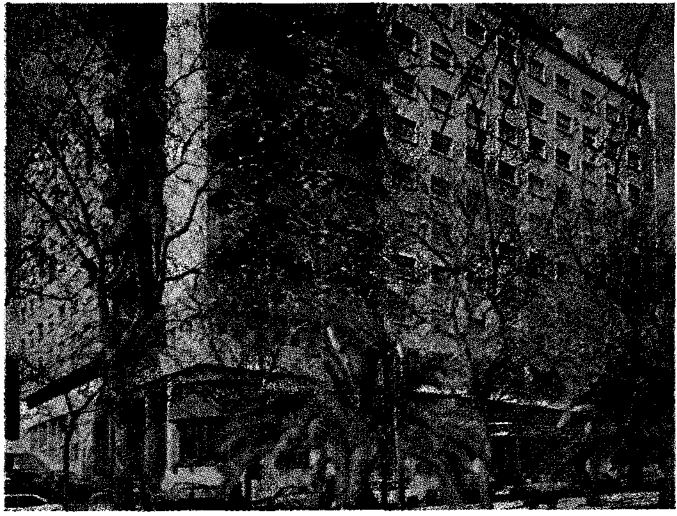

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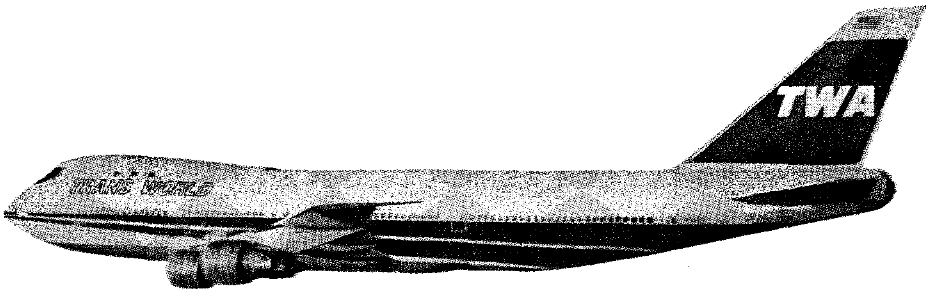

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surance industry held in 1968, occupations that various insurance companies considered to be grounds for rejection of applications for auto insurance, or acceptance only after careful study or on a restricted basis, included those of entertainers, farm laborers and nursery workers, rural-mail deliverers, travelling auditors, bartenders, musicians, clergymen and church workers, laborers, migrant farm workers, military cooks and stewards, professional athletes, miners, painters and paperhangers, students, waiters and waitresses, actors, sports coaches and assistants, travelling salesmen, jockeys, liquor salesmen and store owners, funeral directors, messengers, house movers, "dispensers of beverage, food, or ice cream," domestics, porters, and doctors. The Maryland Casualty Company considered labor-union officials poor risks, and Liberty Mutual came to a similar conclusion about such "unskilled workers" as elevator operators, watchmen, and guards, as well as "persons working on mass production or assembly lines involving operations where no skill or technical knowledge is required."

However large an area these underwriting warnings or prohibitions might seem to cover, the millions of people thus classified as potentially poor risks do not by any means exhaust the list. Also included are people of low income and those unfortunate enough to be living in neighborhoods deemed substandard. An underwriters' manual cited in the 1968 hearings, then in use by the Continental Insurance Company, stated that "a 50% surcharge . . . should normally compensate for the additional exposure of an unfavorable neighborhood if the applicant is residing there for economic reasons and he does not contribute to such condition." This instruction seemed to be almost a magnanimous gesture on the part of Continental Insurance; the underwriters' manual went on to warn that if, however, "the unfavorable environmental situation exists in the applicant's household or is within his control," this "might well make the risk unacceptable." Being an alien seemed in itself almost as bad as being poor, for among risks to be treated with caution by underwriters at the time of the 1968 hearings were "nationals of other countries," "immigrants," and "foreigners unable to speak, read, or write English." The job of checking the degree to which applicants fell into these forbidden or "protective" categories would normally be assigned to consumer-investigation agencies, and it was doubt-

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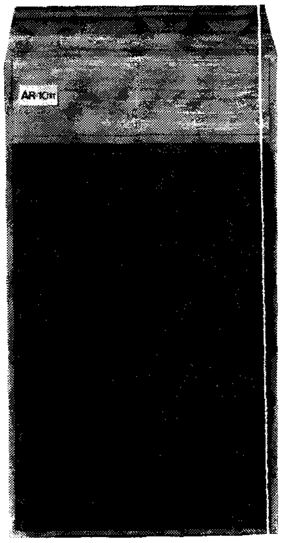

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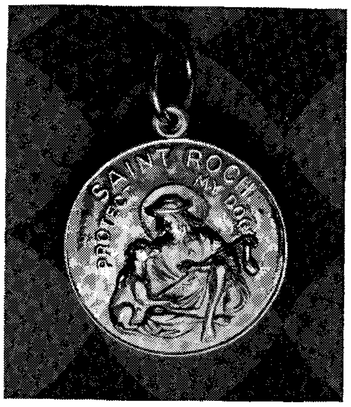

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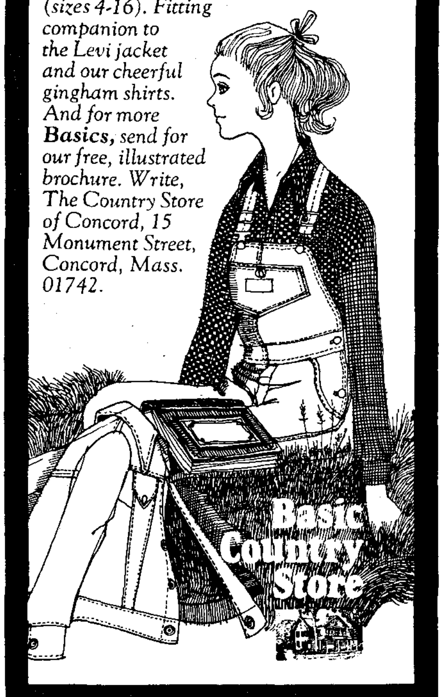

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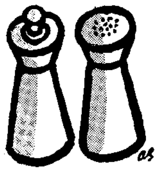
less the attempts of these agencies to satisfy the demands of the insurance industry that accounted for the existence of such helpful codes as "AS" (Anglo-Saxon) in Retail Credit investigative forms prior to the passage of the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

If the applicant for auto insurance with one company failed to survive such basic criteria of reliability, there was little use in his applying to other companies. One underwriters' manual after another made the reason clear; in the catalogues of high risks, it was spelled out: "risks cancelled or declined by another company for underwriting reasons;" "risks cancelled, declined or refused by another company;" "declined or cancelled by another company." The rule is clearly "One for all and all for one." The archivists and purveyors of such adverse information were, of course, the consumer-investigation agencies employed by the insurance companies. The only alternative that a citizen thus rejected and universally blacklisted for standard insurance has is to apply for high-risk insurance at vastly increased premium rates.

But even these precautions were, and are, considered insufficient self-protection by big insurance companies. The notion of "moral risk" is so deeply rooted as an insurance criterion in the underwriting community as to overwhelm many other considerations. Essentially, these "moral risks," or deviations from a set of social norms, rest on the underlying assumption that the underwriters are somehow able to penetrate, by a process of divination, into the subjective outlook of whole classes of citizens and to predict their lifelong behavior. One indication of the seerlike quality of these underwriting judgments can be glimpsed in the Continental Insurance underwriters' manual concerning the accident probabilities of drivers. Under the heading "Attitude," the manual declared, "This is by far the most important underwriting consideration. Only a very small percentage of accidents are due either to mechanical defects in the automobile or to road conditions." The manual went on to stress the actuarial preferability of drivers leading a stable life: "The stable person lives at peace with his family, his neighbors, his boss, and himself. He recognizes and accepts his obligations and responsibilities as a citizen of the community, lives within his means and does not frequently change either his job, his residence, or his spouse." In brief, the norm calls for an attitude of social compliance, and the manual spelled out the significance of noncompliance: "Any variation from the normal conventional mode of living usually has an adverse influence on a risk." It added, "Marriage is the normal state for mature adults," and although it stated that the company regarded single women as an average risk, it declared that "the unmarried male is a different story." If such a person was in that condition because he happened to be divorced or separated, he was "in our opinion, more undesirable than the man who has never married." The manual continued, "The same is true in comparing the divorcée and the unmarried female." And if the applicant *should* be *twice* divorced, the underwriters' course was clear: "We should leave him or her alone."

If divorce or marital separation was a violation of the underwriters' established norms for behavior, it followed that people who had "living arrangements" without benefit of marriage also violated those norms. There are quite a few underwriters who are ready to provide assurance of a connection between extramarital sex or other "moral risks" and increased actuarial risk, not excluding that of mortality. That is why underwriters insist that they are justified in having consumer-investigation agencies seek out and compile this kind of information on citizens who apply for insurance of one kind or another, including life insurance. An outsider might not understand the mathematical reasoning involved, they imply, but the actuarial association is there and, regrettably, is inescapable. And, of course, the Retail Credit management people agree with this view.



Perhaps a better indication of the quality of corporate reasoning behind all the fine calculations of "moral risk" considerations may be found by inquiring into the attention that Retail Credit and other agencies pay, on behalf of the insurance industry, to one particular factor whose influence upon mortality tables is vast and indisputable. I refer to cigarette smoking. The number of premature deaths from lung cancer in this country caused directly by cigarette smoking exceeds sixty thousand a year—a far higher figure than the annual death toll from automobile accidents, which last year was estimated at forty-five thousand four hundred (down from fifty-five thousand one hundred in 1973, owing both to the increased cost of gasoline and to the reduced speed limit on the nation's highways). In fact, on the basis of calculations made by Dr. Lu-

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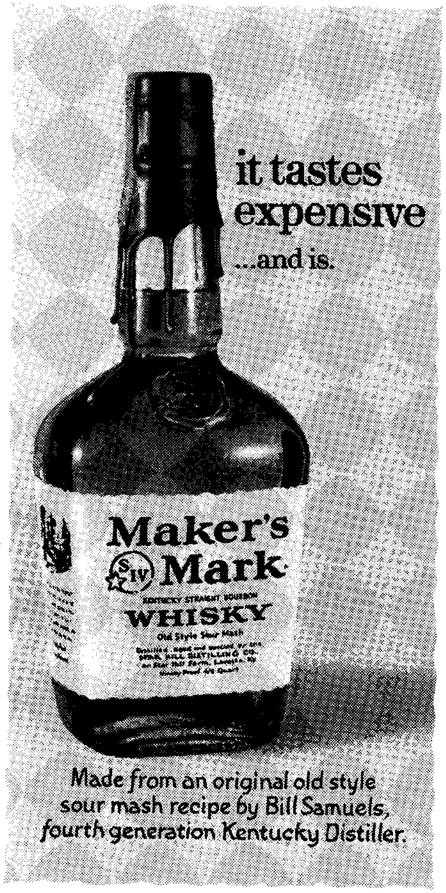
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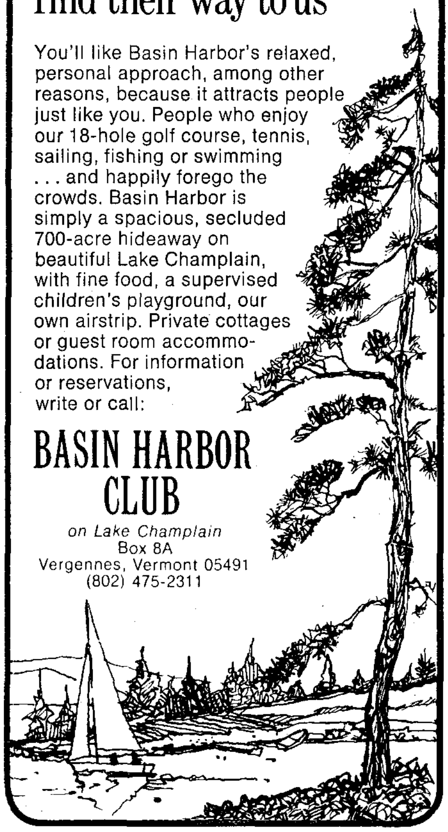

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ther Terry, a former Surgeon General of the United States, the total annual premature mortality of which cigarette smoking is an important contributing cause is about five times the large annual mortality caused by automobile accidents. In all their investigations into the character, reputation, and habits of people who apply for life insurance, do the Retail Credit people routinely ask whether applicants are regular smokers and thus constitute demonstrably bad mortality risks? The answer is that (except in certain minor and special cases in which some life-insurance company might, as a sales inducement, offer a reduced premium rate to nonsmokers) they do not make any such inquiry. The insurance companies, while this actuarial atomic bomb is going off in their midst, bringing about fatalities on an almost genocidal scale, prefer to direct the energies of the investigative agencies they hire to such fine points as citizens' "living arrangements," sexual preferences, and all the rest. Indeed, the standards of the insurance industry concerning the moral condition of applicants reach far beyond mere passive risk-assessing. They appear to be aimed at reinforcing an existing system of penalties exacted for deviations from social norms that might have been established for some theoretically placid, submissive citizenry. When I interviewed Burge, of Retail Credit, in Atlanta, he seemed to concede as much in telling me, at the conclusion of our conversation, "We've made the progress we have in this country because we've been willing to exchange information in order to qualify for whatever it is we were supposed to qualify for. The fact that all of us know our records have been subject to review has imposed a little discipline on all of us. We paid our bills because we wanted to get more credit. We graduated from school because we knew our prospective employers were going to check the school records. There needs to be this kind of discipline in a free society." The wages of sin—"any variation from the normal conventional mode of living," as the Continental Insurance underwriting manual described it—is a black mark in the books of the underwriters, courtesy of their agents in the consumer-investigation business. One Senate staff man who has had a good many dealings with the insurance industry has characterized the social outlook of underwriters with the remark "They're really just a cut above the Archie Bunkers." Even up to the late nineteen-sixties,

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the underwriter guidelines of many insurance companies were full of restrictions and cautions whose racist overtones were quite unmistakable. The manager of one Retail Credit branch office told me that when Retail Credit finally did eliminate from its investigation forms the requirement to identify the race of applicants, the result was that for a while "we got wiped out," and that the company "lost business the way you can't imagine," because insurance companies took their business to other investigation agencies that continued overtly to designate the race of people.

William O. Bailey, who is an executive vice-president of Aetna Life and Casualty and has (the unhappy personal experiences of Miss Beverly Thompson with his particular company aside) the reputation of being one of the more progressive corporate leaders in the insurance business, is no detractor of the professional standards of the industry. But when I interviewed him not long ago, he conceded that the process of imbuing the underwriters of such a large organization with notions that tended to go against the traditional grain was not easy and, he said, "frequently takes a long time." He told me, "It's a constant effort to get your whole organization tuned in on your policy. In subtle ways, the underwriters indicate that they have their own values. You find out that they are not automatons when it comes to following orders." One of Bailey's principal associates said he was proud of the fact that Aetna was "one of the first insurance companies to eliminate race, creed, and color" as underwriting considerations. That happened back in the nineteen-sixties. The same executive recalled, of the elimination of these considerations, "It was stimulated by the fact that when we did an underwriting audit on our Richmond office, which had been underwriting an extremely large colored group there, we discovered that we had had very good results with this group. Some people in the company were surprised and shocked by the change in policy. It took five years for us to convince the last pocket of resistance"—among company underwriters, that is—"that they didn't need to worry about this particular aspect." Of the attitude that underwriters generally tended to take toward such matters as the occupations and possible "moral risks" of insurance applicants, he added, "There's a security-blanket comfort in thinking you have something there in actuarial terms that you can rely on." Just since the

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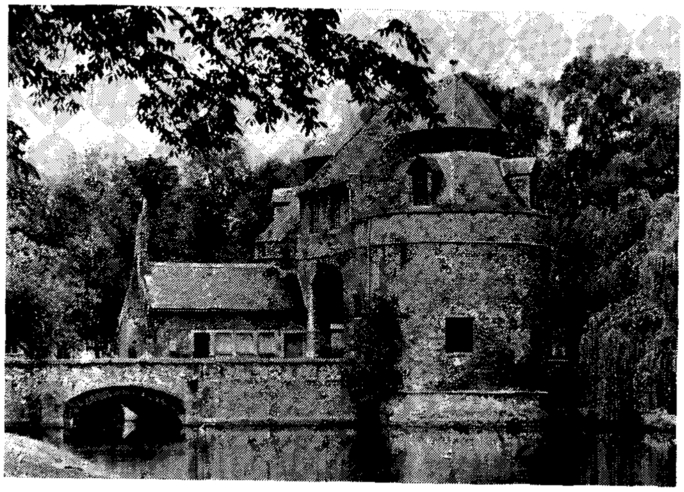
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passage of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, Aetna has cut down substantially on its reliance on Retail Credit investigative reports, although the insurance company still uses Retail Credit for such so-called objective information on applicants for car insurance as motor-vehicle records. The advent of state legislation for no-fault automobile insurance may have influenced this policy concerning Aetna's attitude toward the need for investigation-agency reports on the character of applicants for automobile insurance. But many of the largest insurance companies continue to use the Retail Credit and other investigative services as before, and on the basis of the same old underwriting standards for acceptable social conduct, many of these companies maintaining, as an Aetna official told me, "very severe and restrictive underwriting postures" toward personal behavior and life styles inimical to the actuaries.

WHAT makes it possible for this kind of Archie Bunkerism to remain entrenched in an industry that so directly affects the economic, and even the employment, standing of millions of citizens? One important part of the answer lies, it seems to me, in a traditional alliance between the underwriting profession and the legal profession. Behind the activities of the underwriters lurk the calculations of company lawyers, and what the lawyers are involved with often has little to do with such actuarial realities as highway-accident and mortality tables. As far as insurance-company lawyers are concerned, the "moral risk" standards and decisions of the underwriters serve as convenient rationalizations for restrictive covenants, secretly arrived at, that often discriminate against whole classes of citizens and are deeply steeped in, and serve to perpetuate, an adversary legal establishment. Evidence of the existence of these motivating forces is apparent in a reading of underwriters' manuals that congressional investigators have turned up. The manuals demonstrate that many of the underwriters' calculations of "moral risks" have their basis less in accident statistics than in subjective estimates by insurance-company lawyers of how favorable an impression an insurance applicant who someday might conceivably become a defendant or an insurance-company witness in a civil-liability suit would appear under examination and cross-examination by lawyers before a trial jury. Such motivation becomes apparent in, for example, an internal document of the Security Insurance group that came to the attention of Senate investigators prior to the 1968 subcommittee hearings, and that listed a number of "underwriting factors"—classes of applicants to be treated with caution, put into assigned-risk categories, or rejected outright. It stated that "elderly insured" persons were to be treated with caution by the underwriters, not only because of "deteriorating physical condition" and "slower reflexes" but also because they often "make poor witnesses in court" and because "juries are often prejudiced against them." Similarly, "juries may be prejudiced against [physically] impaired persons."

Then, there was the problem of "youthful drivers" or students, whose "appearance and/or manners . . . may prejudice a jury" against them. Among the underwriting considerations of insurance applications by "actors, musicians, entertainers, professional athletes" was that "juries . . . may react adversely" to such people, because they are in occupations "with great exposure to alcohol, drugs, crime, vice."

If people in the entertainment world might make a poor showing in court, provided they happened to wind up there, what about poor people? According to the Security Insurance underwriters' manual, "persons . . . of low income may live in substandard environment areas" and "appearance and manners of such persons may prejudice a jury against them." Same thing with the unemployed: "Juries may be prejudiced against them," for their unemployed status "may be considered [a] sign of shiftlessness and irresponsibility." And nationals of other countries? The underwriters were cautioned that they present "problems with courts and juries because of difficulty in expressing themselves" and their "appearance and manners may adversely affect juries." And so on.

Why is it that so many insurance-company underwriters' manuals have marked clergymen and church workers as poor risks? An internal document of the Continental-National-American group of insurance companies procured by the subcommittee observed, somewhat unsympathetically, of this calling, "The clergyman may drive with the attitude that the 'Lord will provide.' " But when I pressed an insurance-industry official on this point during a recent interview, he went somewhat further in explaining the discrimination against men of the cloth. "Preachers tend to be as unwelcome in underwriters' manuals as bartenders," he said. "The reality behind this is the estimate of the lawyers that bartenders, when they get on the witness stand, may not be well received by juries—even though a guy who happens to be a bartender may well be a teetotaller and a man of decent character. Obviously, preachers aren't undesirable to the underwriters because juries are unlikely to believe them. They're undesirable for a different reason. As trial witnesses in accident cases, for example, they tend to accept responsibility for errors they may have committed. They tend to undermine the case that an insurance-company lawyer may be presenting. They are of a forgiving nature. They don't blame the other guy. And we know that awareness of this factor is responsible for their unfavorable listing in underwriting standards." Thus, truthfulness itself seems to be classifiable as an adverse personality trait in an applicant for insurance under the standards prevailing among underwriters and insurance-company lawyers. Another insurance-industry official remarked to me recently, "The underwriters, in trying to keep their defensive posture as strong as possible, crank into their evaluations such questions as 'What kind of a defendant in trial is my policyholder likely to make? What are society's, and a jury's, prejudices against him likely to be?' "

Under such a system, is it really any wonder that Retail Credit, and all the other janissaries of the consumer-investigation industry, seem so eager, so strongly motivated, to sniff out signs of substandard living conditions, informal "living arrangements," inarticulateness, sexual preferences, strange accents, long hair, and residence in "substandard environments"? The fact is that the citizen appears to have no Constitutional rights worth mentioning where the interests of the insurance industry are concerned; for the most part, such rights tend to be mere impediments, to be avoided by the application of systems of "protective" and "declinable" information quotas. The citizen unfortunate enough to belong to a disfavored class or category has been tried, judged, and penalized far in advance of any justice that might be obtainable in court.

—THOMAS WHITESIDE

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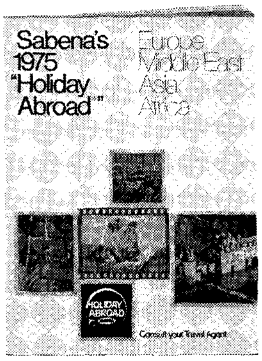

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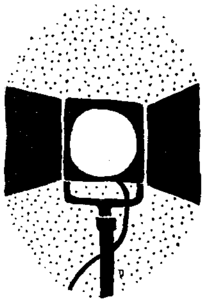
THE THEATRE

JOKING AND PREACHING

JAMES KIRKWOOD'S "P.S. Your Cat Is Dead!" amounts through artistic miscalculation to two plays for the price of one, and this is nearly always less of a bargain in a theatre than it is in a supermarket. Still, because one of the two plays that present themselves in uneasy entanglement on the stage of the John Golden is very funny and the other is at least moderately interesting, the evening proves an enjoyable one. Go and laugh at Mr. Kirkwood's many excellent jokes in the first act and, during the second act, ponder with gravity his preaching on the subject of sex, which he wishes to free from the usual tiresome discriminations in respect to gender. "Bother gender!" says Mr. Kirkwood, and I happen to think he is right, but he has chosen the wrong occasion for such a sermon; his audience, having been encouraged to do nothing but laugh until the first-act curtain falls, is astonished upon its return to discover that the first item on the agenda has become the reform of unthinking heterosexuals.

Mr. Kirkwood's comedy takes place on New Year's Eve, and I confess that I've a weakness for plays that make use of that particular holiday; one knows that *some*thing is bound to happen, be it only the ringing of nearby church bells or someone drunkenly exhaling "Auld Lang Syne." We are in a delightful loft in the Village, designed by William Ritman. Mr. Ritman has a knack for making his sets look lived in, and in the present case verisimilitude is much strengthened by a working stove, refrigerator, and sink, and by a skylight whose transoms swing open and shut with welcome authority. (Young people coming to New York for the first time and poring over the real-estate ads in *The Village Voice* dream of stumbling on a Ritman loft: brnstn, hmd ceil, wbf, $88, no fee.) The occupant of the loft is a thirty-eight-year-old actor named Jimmy, and he is in trouble. He has just been dropped from a play, his role is being written out of the TV soap opera that provides his daily bread, and his girl has decided to break off their relationship. It is she who appends to her note of farewell the postscript that his cat is dead. Nor is that all, for what he doesn't know upon arriving home is that a burglar is hiding under his bed.

And what a burglar! A combative Italian-American named Vito, he is paying his third visit to Jimmy's flat; on an earlier visit, he inadvertently stole the manuscript of a novel that Jimmy was working on and, in disgust at its lack of value to a fence, threw it away. The plot of the play revolves around the relationship that develops between the two men. At first, Jimmy, having captured Vito, is tempted to turn him over to the police, but it occurs to him that he will gain greater satisfaction from punishing Vito on the premises. Starting as adversaries, they soon perceive that neither of them will be able to hold the upper hand for long. Thanks to Vito's persistence and in spite of Jimmy's reiterated objections, a bond begins to form. In the first act, the bond is largely a matter of gags, both sight and verbal; in the second act, when we have learned that Vito is bisexual, the gags diminish and a serious demand for affection begins. By the end of the play, though Jimmy and Vito go to sleep in separate beds, they are no longer separate.



Keir Dullea, as Jimmy, and Tony Musante, as Vito, are both admirable, though it is only fair to point out that a crucial aspect of the play is obscured by the fact that Mr. Musante appears to be older than Mr. Dullea; in the play it is of importance to know that Jimmy is thirty-eight and therefore of a much older and stuffier generation than Vito, who is in his mid-dle twenties. The touchingness of Vito's quest for love and his scorn for Jimmy's old-fashioned sexual mores emerge with difficulty, against the witness of our eyes.

Several other characters come and go in the course of the evening, and again I found the casting strange. Jennifer Warren, who plays Jimmy's girl, lacks bodily suppleness and charm, and the jock she chooses to go off and spend a skiing weekend with in preference to Jimmy reads his lines with a bluff manliness that parodies the Yale of Bart Hodge and Frank Merriwell. No harm could come to a girl in his company, and no good, either. The play has been very ably directed by Vivian Matalon. —BRENDAN GILL

OFF BROADWAY

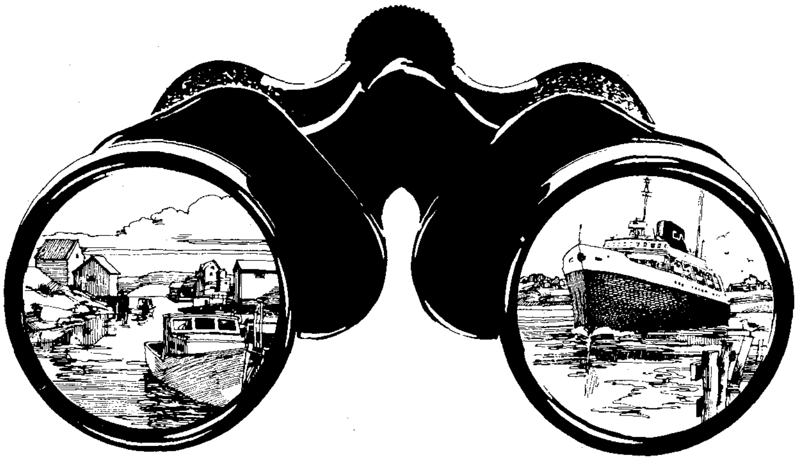
At the Chekhov Counter

THE Zykovs of Maxim Gorky's "The Zykovs," which will run at the Equity Library Theatre until April 20th, are a rich timber merchant, of around fifty, and his sister, Sophia, who is a beautiful widow, twenty years younger. When Zykov's son, a dim poet and a drunk, becomes engaged, Zykov snatches the bride for himself. Bad mistake. Convent-bred, she is a timid, can't-we-live-quietly-and-peacefully type, referred to by even the servants as "the little nun." She is a pain and, unconsciously, the source of many of the troubles that follow. The plot is filled with episodes, most of them concerned with the unhappiness of Zykov and his son, and with the attempts of courageous Sophia to instill a little gumption and virtue into everyone else. It is also filled with many tellings off and with generalization upon generalization—"we Russians" this and "we Russians" that, and, in the case of a detestable German crook, "you Russians." The climax is the obligatory offstage pistol shot (grazed rib, but no cigar), followed by a reconciliation between father and son, the dismissal of the young wife, and the determination of Zykov and Sophia to continue to work hard, shoulder to shoulder, and to face whatever lies ahead.

The script was written by Gorky in 1912, so we know what lies ahead. It all seems coarsened, third-string Chekhov, with a few good scenes and with playable parts. The parts are generally well enough played, under Isaac Schambelan's direction, especially so by Louis Turenne as Zykov, William Robertson as an old bookkeeper, Delphi Harrington as Sophia, Gaetano Bongiovanni as a forest warden, and Susan Sharkey as the virgin bride. There is also one glorious moment when somebody is asked why he is gloomy, and he replies simply that he isn't paid enough. You don't get much of that in Russian lit.

THE remarkable National Theatre of the Deaf opened a one-week engagement at the Brooklyn Academy last Monday evening, with S. Ansky's "The Dybbuk" and a merry afterpiece, "Priscilla, Princess of Power," based on a script by James Stevenson. Some of the actors use sign language, and some (the so-called narrators) speak and sing; the common quality is that they all *act*, and they are so skillfully intermingled and synchronized that the ear is never cheated. The productions, under the direction of John Broome, for "The Dybbuk," and Ed Waterstreet, Jr., for "Priscilla," are a wonder to behold. (Settings by David Hays, the producing director of the company; costumes by Fred Voelpel; lighting by Guy Bergquist.) "The Dybbuk"—about a Jewish bride possessed by the spirit of a young man who has died for love of her, and about the rabbinical rites that temporarily dispossess him—is ceremonial and sombre in mood and movement, though never bleak; this is a Chassidic story. It runs for almost two hypnotic hours. After an intermission, the actors, having doffed their old-country ways along with their ritualistic robes, come tumbling back, releasing themselves and their audience to twenty-five minutes of laughter in Mr. Stevenson's "Priscilla, Princess of Power," using the bumpy frames and word-filled balloons of comic books to tell of the triumphant progress of a girl who starts out on the assembly line of a jelly-bean factory and ends up flattening everyone in sight, including a villainous dentist named Dr. Schlock. I don't know whether I enjoyed the actors most as dental equipment, as a drive-in movie, or as a gas station. Most of the music for both plays was composed by the company. (I know; beats me, too.)

RON COWEN's "Inside Lulu," which is playing at a little Off Off Broadway house called 8 Waverly Place, is a comic spin-off from Frank Wedekind's "Lulu," that creature of rapacious sexuality out of prewar Germany. Mr. Cowen has split his Lulu into three young women (they enter wrapped in one skirt), none of whom gets the slightest sexual satisfaction from the man who chooses her. The play is certainly original, with many inventive, funny scenes, and it is written with the sure touch that one would expect of the author of "Summertree." Still, I doubt whether it is strong enough to sustain an entire evening. Also, it presupposes a familiarity with Wedekind that may not be all that widespread. No verdict, though, because it is performed with breathtaking ineptitude by Section Ten, yet another group of superannuated N.Y.U. students, like the Shaliko bunch that recently shredded "Ghosts" at the Public. —EDITH OLIVER



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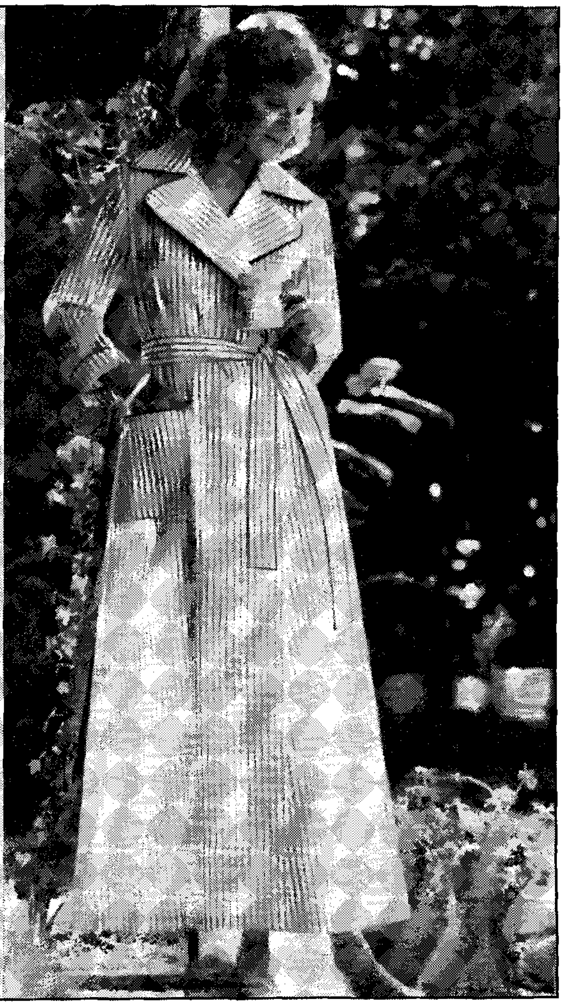

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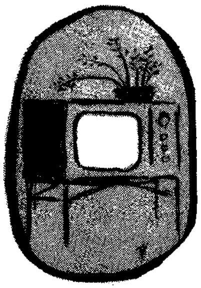
Waiting for the Storyteller



I WAS standing on a city street corner a few days ago with two of our children when, with a wail of sirens, a couple of police cars emerged from the tangle of traffic and shrieked their way past us, heading uptown.

"What do you suppose is happening?" I said.

"Must be after a robber," said the younger child.

"More likely a dope raid," said the other.

"You don't use sirens on a dope raid," said the first.

"You do if the suspect is getting away. Lieutenant Kojak uses sirens all the time."

"Anyway, it's some kind of an adventure," said the older child, who is ten.

We all agreed it was probably some kind of an adventure. Later, as we were walking uptown ourselves, I asked, "What do you think an adventure is?"

"It's something scary you don't have to believe in," the older child said.

I HAVE been thinking lately about adventure on television, not just because of the two police cars and the children's response to them (the moment framed by a television scenario: the detective; the squad-car chase; the adventures of Lieutenant Kojak) but because it seems increasingly true that this is an awkward, self-conscious time for adventure in our culture, and that television is probably the single most important source of adventure narrative that remains to us.

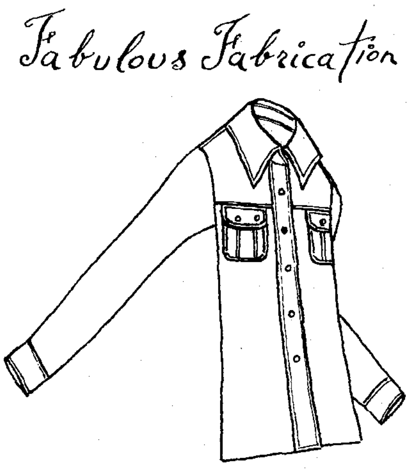
Did adventure die in the trenches of the First World War, or perhaps in the advance of science and technology? At any rate, what we call the spirit of adventure seems to have disappeared or receded from modern life—almost discredited, as it were, along with adventure's protagonist, the hero—to reappear from time to time in the relentless, prosaic professionalism of the astronauts or in the new adventure metaphors: the retired businessmen and their wives who travel up the Amazon on tour or visit the Galápagos Islands on a cruise ship, or the sensibility-prone young who backpack in Nepal or do somersaults above the ski slopes of Colorado. The other evening on television, in fact, I saw two advertisements that seemed to well conjure up the new adventurism. One was for a beer. It showed two attractively raffish American men pushing their way through a throng at a South American river port. Each has a backpack and a stagy, well-travelled look. They board a river steamer. The captain seems to be a tough hombre. "Where you fellows from?" he asks. "Omaha," one says. He laughs. They laugh. They guzzle some beer. Small world, small world! The other ad was for a credit-card company and showed a modest-seeming man in a plaid jacket. "Do you know me? I'm one of the astronauts who walked on the moon," says the man, whose name is Charles Conrad, Jr. "But when I walk in here to rent a car, they don't always recognize me." That is why, he explains, he always carries this credit card wherever he travels. The ad seemed sad, and also truthful to something: as if we had fashioned such a tight-fitting suit of anti-heroic professionalism for these moon explorers that there was now no way they could escape it, even in car-rental offices.

Intellectuals in America make much of their disdain for television—for regular television programming. And the mass of people make much of their disdain for intellectuals and their artifacts—notably, serious novels and serious films. One wonders if the absence or misdirection of adventure narrative isn't at the heart of some of these conflicting disdains—which is to say that since ancient times people have wanted stories, and the stories they have most wanted have been adventure stories; indeed, it isn't pushing a point to claim that since the period of the Attic bards adventure narrative has formed the basis and the dynamic for most of the great stories of Western literature. Consider the skein of adventure that runs from the "Odyssey," through "Don Quixote," to "Robinson Crusoe," "David Copperfield," and "Moby Dick," and perhaps, finally, to that other odyssey "Ulysses." But with James Joyce's great novel modern literature appeared to withdraw its interest from what had theretofore been regarded as adventure—the largely physical exploits of heroic characters—in favor of stories of human sensibility and of psychological exploration (some still might say adventure) within the human consciousness. The traditional adventure narrative was, so to speak, abandoned by serious writers and passed down to the literary subculture of the detective story, children's stories, "cheap fiction," and the new, popular form of the movies, where, in heroic dramas of the American West, of gangsters, of spies, and of two world wars, it remained the prime source of mass entertainment until the last generation. But movies, too, have "grown up," in part abandoning and in part abandoned by their popular clientele. True, adventure narrative still remains in movies, but it, too, is more and more that of a subculture, with an occasional thriller or faddish "disaster" film, a plenitude of black-oriented "cheap fiction," and now and then a successful modern adventure, such as "The Sting," that draws in both the élite and the mass audience because of its parodic ambivalences. The serious trend in movies, as in literature some time ago, is mainly toward explorations of sensibility and psychology, toward symbolism and episodic narrative—with the result that at present the place where adventure narrative survives most consistently and with the greatest appearance of its own importance is on television.

Even so, it is often a bizarre and anachronistic presence. Consider some capsule descriptions from a recent *TV Guide* of current adventure-type programs:

> AVENGERS—Adventure: Steed's only lead to the death of an agent is a department-store sales slip issued on a day the store was closed. . . .
>
> EMERGENCY!: The paramedics rescue a man trapped in the ooze of a gushing oil well. . . .
>
> MANNIX: Hired to find the straying wife of a politically ambitious publisher, Mannix finds the pay very generous and the case suspiciously easy to solve. . . .
>
> PROTECTORS: A deadly chase over stacks of concrete pipes results when the Contessa faces a treacherous kidnapper. . . .
>
> STAR TREK—Adventure: Kirk (William Shatner) and three crew members try to reverse the effects of a storm, which swept them into an incredibly savage universe. . . .
>
> ADAM-12: Malloy is held hostage by young criminals, who demand the release of a prisoner convicted of killing a pimp. . . .

What does one make of such a list, or of the stories that these codelike captions fairly accurately describe? Consider, for example, the extravagant variety of the adventures to be unfolded: the death of an agent; a man trapped



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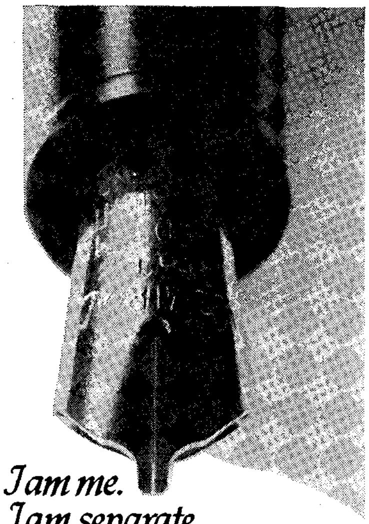
in a gusher of oil; a missing woman; bribery; a deadly chase; kidnapping; a storm in outer space; abduction by criminals; murder. But we know, too, that this seeming extravagance doesn't necessarily mean anything, for the same capsule spirit that wrote the captions will animate the stories. Not only will all end well—which is true of many adventure stories—but nothing importantly affecting will happen en route. The detective will collar the criminal by the end of the drama; in the process he may be threatened, or an assistant may be killed, or someone may scream or crack up in a car or be drowned in a bathtub. But the logic of the modern television adventure will have dominated these events, as if the events hardly existed. This logic often has the appearance of "classic simplicity"—of lean, simple narrative. But in reality it is almost never the textured, artful simplicity of classic narrative, or even of fairy tales, with their intimations of tensions and shadows beneath clear surfaces; rather, it is the denuded simplicity of the detective story or of *police-desk journalism—of the simple* declarative sentence. My name is Mulligan. I'm a cop. To be sure, some of the television adventure programs are better than others. "Columbo" and "Kojak," for example, seem superior to the run-of-the-mill cops-and-robbers shoot-outs, but this is mainly because the producers populate the stories with interesting minor characters. That comes down to being mostly an improvement in sensibility or in character acting. The adventures remain insistently conventional. There is little genuine excitement, except in the sense that a ride on a modest roller coaster is said to be exciting—a roller coaster where the safety of the trip is known to be absolute, and the only surprises are a series of predictable (and therefore unsurprising) tossings and turnings. At a tense moment in "Kojak," the camera reveals a homicidal rapist crouched behind a garbage can as the great detective strides toward an alley. We experience a brief, mechanical tic of apprehension while waiting for the members of the detective force to appear on the scene, and so startle the criminal, and so shoot him; but it is likely to be a response not so much to this particular encounter in this particular alley as to a literary or movie memory of ambushes that somehow made us care more. Why does one care so little now? "Kojak," after all, is an adult-oriented program; adults are fascinated by adventure fully as much as children are—witness the suc-



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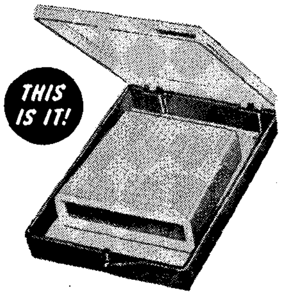

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cesses of John le Carré and Alfred Hitchcock. It seems to me that even the large, neglected adventure-hungry audience recognizes instinctively that these modern television adventures don't really *apply*. Not that all the programs or dramas are totally beside the point, for the telefilm storytellers are clever and have new (mainly cinematic) visual techniques to assist them, together with the public's current penchant for topical detail. Still, modern television adventures seem to be both popular and somehow unremembered, as if a storyteller had crept into our house and told a story—with many declamations, and much eye-rolling and firing of toy pistols—and then had left without a trace, and we had waked up the next day without even a visceral memory of his tale. What, for example, does anyone remember of the great, long-running adventure "Dragnet," except the theme song?

In an intelligent and interesting book called "The Adventurer," Paul Zweig has remarked on the pivotal position of Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" in the mainstream of Western narrative literature, finding in the character of Crusoe the prototype of the modern anti-adventurer—the point of his adventures being, after all, that a man might survive on a desert island neither by heroics nor by gallant action but by the steadfast application of English domestic virtues. Zweig also points out that with Defoe's novels of early-eighteenth-century London life begins a new, formal, literary view of the city as an arena of adventure, with crime or criminality as its principal field of play. He goes on to trace the evolution of narrative adventure from the eroticism of Casanova, through the Gothic novel, to the recent journeys of hallucinogenic voyagers, but it often seems as if most television adventures had remained rooted in the concepts of Defoe—with their relentlessly practical men inextricably involved in the criminal substructure of societies. Even when the setting is shifted to the American West or to outer space, a similar obsession with domestic practicality plus criminality seems to persist. Captain Kirk, in "Star Trek," for example, is himself a Crusoe-like character, resolving complex and threatening hazards of intergalactic travel with down-home rationalism, while his Man Friday, Mr. Spock, though he is alleged to be equipped with magic telepathic powers, in fact employs them chiefly in the service of sound, earthbound common sense.

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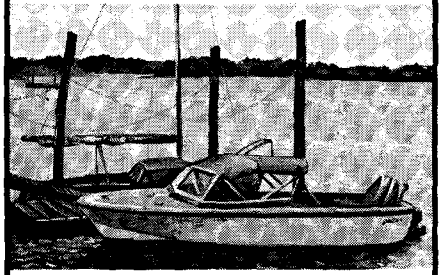

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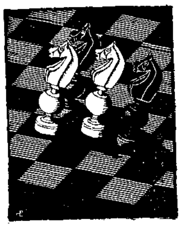
television adventures, then, are at least true to the real adventures of life, for it has turned out that our real space explorers have necessarily been practical men, anti-adventurous in the Crusoe manner, and, if not actually weeping with terror at the sight of a footprint on the moon, at least surpassingly proud of their capacities for teamwork, responsibility, and common sense. Furthermore, there is no denying that the theatricality of cities and of criminality has amply remained with us since the time of Defoe. But I suspect that these are surface relevances or comparisons. At the root of the difficulty of creating effective storytelling for the mass audience (by which I mean stories that induce not only ratings but memory) are, I imagine, two problems. One is the essential insincerity of the stories; it is hard to accept the premise that our mass-media storytellers can themselves believe in the stories they are telling us. After all, most of them are surely intelligent and educated men and women, who for the most part come from the kind of cultural background that has been schooled in the anti-adventure and anti-narrative tendencies of twentieth-century literature. If one could conjure up an association of Attic bards who didn't care much for gods, or fate, or heroic action, or even the Trojan War, it would have taken more than the appearance of a Homer to produce the "Iliad." Still, this is mainly a guess as to the personae of our modern storytellers, and even if correct it can account only for the detached, rhetorical, borrowed quality that one finds in so many television dramas—the sense of being given only the shell of an adventure. I suspect that where television stories go wrong—in terms of not really speaking to the audience—is in what lies under the shell. This is a difficult substance to isolate, for it seems to be many things. For one, it seems to be simple narrative—a good story. But there is rarely a good story on popular television; the stories are nearly always the same, or have the same feeling and the same balances. Then, there is much talk of mythology. Detective So-and-So is a "mythic hero"—as are various Western sheriffs or saintly medical men. But what does "mythic" mean except "pertaining to myths," and what are myths except dramatic organizations of the varieties of human life? *Everyone* is mythic, including the elevator operator who takes the myth-making television writer to his office every morning. Orpheus descended to the Underworld from a surface world consisting of a complex set of relationships between himself and his conscious and unconscious environment—the gods. Detective Mulligan descends to the Times Square subway station, but it will take a lot more than mood photography and portentous dialogue to make him "Orphic." It seems to me that what lies under the shells of our mass-audience adventures is neither story nor myth but mainly the surviving embers of nineteenth-century pietistic morality.

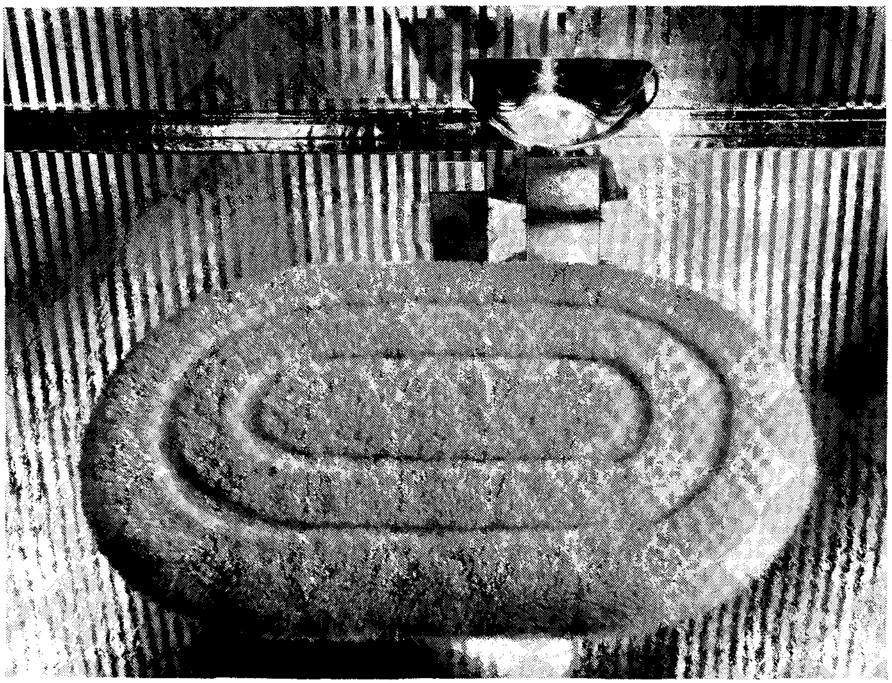
In recent months, there has been much official and public discussion of violence in television programming, with both television executives and consumer groups seeming to agree that there is too much of it, and that scenes of mayhem and gunfighting have a deleterious effect on the youth of the nation. As I think I've written before, one can't in good conscience take a position in favor of the sort of random, gratuitous violence one so often sees on the television screen, though I leave the argument as to whether meretricious depictions of gunplay incite the citizenry to act likewise to the no man's land of sociological debate, where I think the question belongs. But I have a feeling that what is corrupt—or, anyway, amiss—with so much of the narrative one sees on television isn't that there is either too much or too little violence but that most of the action that takes place on the television screen is somehow blurred, muted, transposed behind a gauzy screen of pietism and morality. No matter how much killing or shooting takes place in a detective or Western program, the one note that seems to reverberate through the action is the moral position of the detective or sheriff and the moral position of the program—our storyteller. On the simpler programs, the morality is infused in relatively simple fashion: noble, rational, pro-society figures against wicked, antisocial, if often romantic, criminals. On the more ambitious programs, such as the aforementioned "Kojak" and "Columbo," among many others, a more complex moral tone pervades the narrative—usually an ill-meshed combination of quasi Freudianism and leftover Christian pietism. Characters can hardly move without being "understood," though it is rarely a deeply felt understanding but, rather, a rhetorical note of moralizing. The criminal acts because of a wretched upbringing, which is never shown but simply told us, often



by the detective in pursuit: "The fellow had a wretched upbringing," mutters the mythic detective, speeding uptown in his police car.

In a fine essay titled "On Misunderstanding the *Oedipus Rex*," the great classics scholar E. R. Dodds attacked the nineteenth-century English critics for undermining the strength of vision of the early Greek dramatists by interpreting the dramatists' noble works through moral-conscious Victorian eyes. Oedipus didn't meet disaster because he had a tragic moral flaw, said Dodds. He met it because an oracle had prophesied that he would, and, being of heroic character, he chose to meet it. That is how the ancient Greeks conceived of the world. Americans in the late twentieth century conceive of it differently, but if their lives—and their periodic explosions of personality and consciousness—are any gauge, they no longer conceive of it in terms of Christian pietism, though they seem often to be trapped beneath the surface of that. Adventure, after all, is escape. How, then, escape from private, nearly abandoned pietism into an official televised pietism? How escape from a private national experience that is attempting, quite bravely, to redefine its recent concepts of criminality and society into story-dramas that still insist on and present a frozen, fairy-tale world of cops and robbers? In short, television storytelling seems to speak to us from a void, appealing to the mass audience's need for stories, but then furnishing unfelt and idealized versions of ourselves—and using ideals that are mostly rearward-facing and discredited. As for the actual stuff of our mythology, our own Trojan War—our space missions, our explorations of the subconscious, our proud battles beneath the skin with our own selves and bodies—these are adventures that television scarcely attends to in the organizing form of stories; and does little more than hint at beneath a screen of moralizing journalism, which is the same as not attending to. The story-minded audience remains out there, perhaps uncertain of its evolving relations with the gods. This is a transitional period, apparently, in which we are waiting for tales of new adventure and for new storytellers, and are meanwhile making do with Robinson Crusoe in science-fiction dress or the sly pieties of law-enforcement heroes.

STILL, I think that, by chance, there remains one small area in popular television entertainment where a dim echo of non-moralizing adven-



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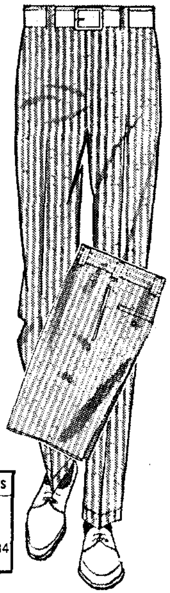

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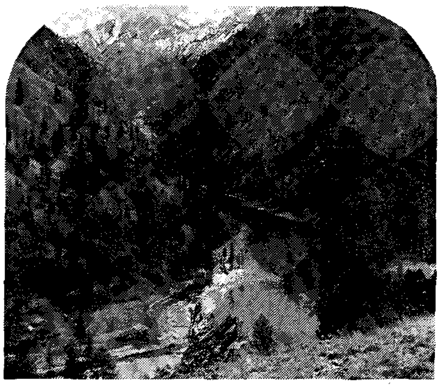
ture storytelling persists. I came across it the other evening while looking over the shoulders of my children as they watched filmed scenes of animals prowling across the television screen: one of the nature documentaries that the networks show every so often as family entertainment. In this instance, the program was about hyenas in the Ngorongoro Crater of East Africa, and was produced in what has become the conventional manner for such studies; that is, with views of much splendid natural scenery, many striking, almost surreally intimate scenes of wildlife, and a kind of modest, firm, unapologetic thread of narrative. Then, as I listened to this narrative—describing a scene of hyenas on the prowl after a herd of zebras—I thought I heard another voice:

> A zebra is separated from the herd.
> Isolated, she becomes the prey.
> She is no match for the hyenas.
> She is doomed.
> The hyenas have powerful jaws that can crack bones in a single stroke.

It seemed to be the clear, simple voice of the storyteller. And all the while there had been something beautiful in the flight of the zebra and, in a way, something equally beautiful in the pursuit by the fleet and terrible hyenas, and something straightforward, and even (perhaps because it was on the animals' terms) meaningful, in the end of the chase: the death and destruction of the zebra. After a moment, I thought, What can I care for hyenas and zebras? But it seemed to me then that I had cared more about them—about this brief, honest story I had watched and heard—than about most of the insistent dramas of detectives, spies, and space police that I had watched for many months on the same screen. I looked at my children. They were silent now, watching the hyenas lope across the plain, and, I suspected, wrestling within their youthful minds to reconcile the vivid artistic impact of the scene and the prevailing learned-by-rote morality: Never kill a living thing. One imagines sometimes that only the nation that dropped the first two atomic bombs could (or would) later go backpacking into the wilderness muttering, "Never kill a living thing."

Since then, I have watched a number of these nature programs: about bees, and wild dogs, and even jellyfish. Doubtless there is a limit to anyone's capacity for dramatic sympathy with four-legged creatures, to say nothing of bees and jellyfish, so it seems a curious irony that it is here—with these



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"family entertainments" of natural life and death, of objectified action, of the playing out of existence against fate and felt imperatives—that the ancient, receding craft of non-moralizing adventure storytelling should come temporarily to roost.

I made the following notes from a documentary about bees, which showed an extraordinary battle between members of the hive and an attacking army of wasps, and, later, a stark and pitiful scene of the expulsion of resisting drones in order to safeguard the rest of the colony.

Honeybees have many enemies. The worst is the wasp.

After a battle, the wasps often carry back the slaughtered bees as food for their larvae.

Here the entire honeybee colony fights off an attack. Some of the wasps are killed, but the sacrifice borne by the honeybees is always greater.

When there is not enough food to feed the bee colony, some of them must die.

The drones are banished from the colony.

Try as they might, the drones are not allowed back into the hive.

As winter begins, workers are born in great numbers to keep the colony alive. They cluster together, waiting for spring.

Are these, then, our modern epics? One wouldn't want to push the point too far. Still, these wildlife narratives exist on their own plane of adventure and of truth. On the one hand, it is easy to view them as a withdrawal from man and his complexities; on the other hand, possibly they are the beginnings of a new extension of storytelling man into the objective world. At any rate, no one has yet piously complained of too much violence in the Ngorongoro Crater or tried to shroud a beehive in pop psychology. So perhaps we should enjoy them while we can.

—MICHAEL J. ARLEN

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Donald C. Platten, chairman of Chemical Bank, said default on Security National Bank loans caused by deteriorating economic conditions, along with depositor weariness on Long Island created by insolvency of the neighboring Franklin Bank, were the prime causes of Security's difficulties.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

The depositor homeward plods his weary way.

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MUSICAL EVENTS

"Ring" Reflection

IN many respects the Metropolitan "Ring" was just about as good as could be, given the circumstances of its performance. It would have been unrealistic to expect a first-rate presentation. The Met season and its finances are not so organized that for perhaps six weeks the theatre can devote all its resources—orchestra, singers, coaches, stage crews, lighting team—to the preparation and performance of the work, and *to nothing else*. The three "cycles" that the company gave this season—the first since 1961-62—were not so much real cycles as discrete individual performances dropped into a busy repertory. The continuity of adventure that is important both for the executants and for the audience was impossible. Nearly six weeks divided the first "Das Rheingold" from the first "Götterdämmerung." The final "Götterdämmerung" was given on a day when the orchestra had already played "Falstaff;" and the day before that it had played both a public dress rehearsal of "The Siege of Corinth" and then "Don Pasquale." Such things are inevitable in the present Metropolitan scheme of things. One may wish that it were a different kind of company, with different priorities; that it could give to the "Ring" the kind of attention that the two London companies and Scottish Opera do; and that it would perform the cycle within a week, as the Seattle Opera plans to do in July. The English National prepared each "Ring" opera for a year, before assembling its cycle. The orchestra was rehearsed section by section. Every singer was coached individually by the conductor. Since that conductor was Reginald Goodall—increasingly recognized as the greatest Wagnerian of our day—the result was a performance in which in every bar the instruments seemed to be "speaking," while the whole had a coherence, dramatic power, and eloquence unheard since the deaths of Furtwängler and Knappertsbusch. (Associated, as translator, with the venture, I must in decency add a "declaration of interest;" but I am talking now only of musical matters and ways they were tackled.) Such preparation is possible only with a stable resident company; the City Opera might manage it, once it has the necessary singers on the force.

Another approach was Karajan's, at the Salzburg Easter Festival. In a Berlin studio, with the forthcoming Salzburg cast and orchestra, he recorded each opera, achieving the detailed musical polish possible in such circumstances, and then at Salzburg, in a great theatre entirely at his disposal, he gave it scenic form. The Met "Ring" was planned as a pendant to Salzburg's, and for two seasons—"Die Walküre" was mounted in 1967, and "Das Rheingold" in 1968—Karajan himself shaped it; but from the start it was bedevilled by four things: big-city bustle instead of a quiet town in which, for audiences who have come as pilgrims, the opera is the only fixed point of the day; a theatre of traditional design for which the Salzburg scenery had to be distorted; the employment of singers other than those whom Karajan had rehearsed; and an orchestra not the Berlin Philharmonic—those players who bow and breathe as if by his will alone they exist. At its best, the Met "Ring" could be no more than a reflection. Without Karajan, as it has been since 1972, it is but a reflection of a reflection. Wolfgang Weber, the stage director, has set out the moves of Karajan's production, more or less, but their motivation is gone. Günther Schneider-Siemssen's scenery was planned as a series of huge, dim-lit illustrations to the drama that Karajan unfolded in the pit; their gloom was tiresome, and finally depressing, even in Salzburg, and to Sixten Ehrling's less broodingly poetic interpretation they are not a fit accompaniment. But, plainly, the company is stuck with this scenery for a while. If Karajan cannot be coaxed back, the question is: Is an inevitably unsatisfactory "Ring" better than no "Ring" at all? Answering yes, I would confine harsh criticism to what was needlessly wrong. This report is on the first three operas of the first cycle and the "Götterdämmerung" of the third.

The start was unpromising, for the orchestral playing in "Das Rheingold" was both drab and untidy, and there was no glow in the instrumental sound of Act I of "Die Walküre." Things came to life—at any rate, for me—in one particular measure of Act II, at the moment when, after Brünnhilde had sung "Weh! mein Wälsung!," the bass clarinet struck in with the Dejection motif. Dozens of times, during Wotan's monologue, this motif has sounded; but now Vincent Abato sounded it with a *meaning* to suggest that he, too, was concerned at the crumbling of all the god's hopes. The concern was contagious; the other instruments followed suit. Later in the act, during what Wagner calls a "long silence" while Siegmund bends to kiss the sleeping Sieglinde, the "silence" is in fact a bass clarinet solo, continued by the lower strings. Mr. Abato charged it with a rapt intensity that inspired the cellos, in turn, to tender, loving tone. From Act II of "Die Walküre" onward, there was much color and plenty of keen, incisive solo and ensemble work in Mr. Ehrling's interpretation. What the reading lacked was breadth, grandeur, a sense of "organic" growth from one dramatic paragraph, one act, one opera to the next, and that long-breathed orchestral sound, massive yet luminous, which few can achieve. There are but three great "Ring" conductors active today—Goodall, Karajan, and Solti. Since the Metropolitan would not be able to meet their rehearsal requirements, in practical terms it could not have done much better than engage Mr. Ehrling, a thoroughly reliable conductor, who nothing uncommon did but nothing mean.

Heroic singers are in even shorter supply. Neither Thomas Stewart, the Wotan, nor Jess Thomas, the Siegfried, has a voice of limitless power, lyricism, and romance. One can note that, and regret that it should be so; but since each is still among the finest current interpreters of his role, the Met's casting can hardly be criticized on this score. In fact, I found both men's complete understanding of their roles one of the most dependable and satisfying features of the cycle, but did wish that Mr. Stewart, in "Siegfried," would not chuckle and chortle quite so often. (In "Siegfried," most of the Wotan-Siegfried encounter was omitted. The cut is not uncommon, but is unwelcome; the meeting of the old order and the new is a climax in the drama.)

Similar considerations apply to Berit Lindholm, who, as Brünnhilde, made her Metropolitan début, and who is generally considered heiress-apparent to Birgit Nilsson (who sang Brünnhilde in the second cycle). The voice is not generous in timbre but narrow and bright. For two operas, it seemed t
she had increased its projectile
at the expense of expressi
a plucky and incisive
affecting. Then in t

d rung”—the end of her long nt in sight—she sang with majesty and amplitude, achieving in the large house the vividness and intensity for which, in smaller theatres, she has often been admired. Miss Nilsson was Sieglinde. Her “Siegmund, so nenn’ ich dich!” was stentorian; her powerful “O hehrstes Wunder!” shot out of tune; otherwise, she scaled her goddess voice down in an intelligent but not quite convincing attempt to suggest the tender, impulsive maiden. Once Jon Vickers had settled some differences of tempo with the conductor, he was, as ever, a notable Siegmund. In “Das Rheingold,” three Met débutants came to grief: Maureen Forrester was a feeble Erda; Glade Peterson barked his way through Loge’s witty, elegant music; Kolbjörn Höiseth broke Froh’s lyrical effusion into short segments. Ragnar Ulfung was a keen, lively Mime, with not quite enough tone in his voice. Bengt Rundgren was a touching Fasolt, a rather tame Hunding, and a striking, clever Hagen—one of the few basses who get the point of the joke Wagner intended with his trill imitative of terrified sheep (at “*dass gute Ehe sie ge - - - be*”). The Three Norns—Lili Chookasian, Mignon Dunn, and Nell Rankin—were impressive. Miss Dunn was less effective as Fricka and Waltraute. Miss Rankin was a poignant Gutrune. Donald McIntyre, the Gunther (and the Wotan of the second cycle), has a commanding baritone, but it did not focus precisely on the notes. Marius Rintzler’s Alberich wanted force.

In sum, it was a cast of mixed quality, and one such as might be encountered in any major house today. What the production as a whole lacked was the stamp of a directing hand and a sense of ensemble endeavor. A director intent on “making a statement” about the “Ring” can, of course, dreadfully diminish the audience’s experience of the many-layered work even while illuminating some special aspect of it. In a city that has no other “Ring” cycles within easy reach, a conventional staging is probably preferable. But it need not be as characterless as the Met’s. Possibly some young director and conductor team, knowing the scenery and prepared to work with it, will come to Schuyler Chapin with their ideas and, if they are approved, begin at once to choose and coach their cast for the next revival, so far unannounced. All over the country, “Ring” operas are now performed; discoveries are to be made. But New York’s “Ring” should be

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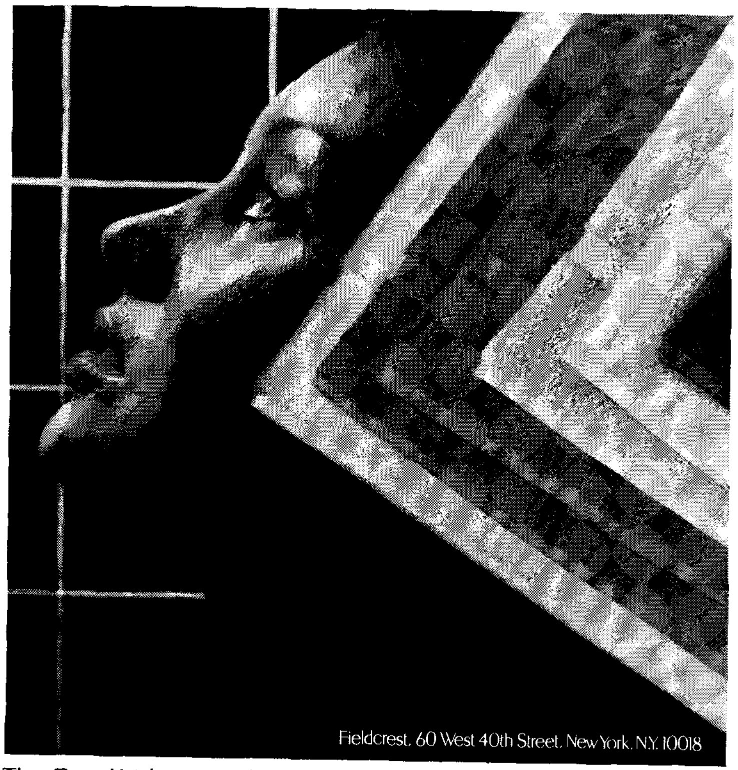

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There were specific things wrong in the performance that should have been put right before curtain rise: inept effects (Rhinemaidens employed six at a time, three popping out at moments to sing, alternating with three ballet girls mugging to loudspeaker sound); major strokes of dramatic symbolism missed (in "Die Walküre," Nothung, the sword, made no contact with Wotan's spear); above all, the encircling gloom, not lifted even when a fiery glare should fill the stage, or when Brünnhilde wakes to hail the bright sun. During the "Ring," I do ask to see the distant scene; one spotlight not enough for me. It was a mishap that Nothung, drawn from the tree, came to pieces in Siegmund's hand, and that in "Siegfried" the anvil refused to break under its stroke. It is probably a mercy when the horse, to whom the last twenty lines of the cycle are addressed, is left to our imagination. But it is simply a mistake when Siegfried, singing specifically of the shield Brünnhilde has given him, carries none.

I AM sometimes charged with the neglect, in these pages, of chamber-music concerts. It is true that, as a rule, I prefer to hear chamber music in a chamber rather than at a public concert in a large, cheerless, and sometimes distractingly drafty hall. A music lover's day ends well in a comfortable chair, with a decanter at his elbow and a Haydn quartet sounding from the loudspeakers. A phonograph record may not be the real thing, but it can come closer to it than even the finest performance heard in unsuitable surroundings. Although the pull of the live event remains strong, the attractions of intimacy, of having choice listening companions, or none, and of being able to turn the pages of a well-lit score without compunction about disturbing other listeners may prove stronger still. Nevertheless, let me declare next that the purest pleasure of the New York season so far was brought me by the Juilliard String Quartet's recital in Alice Tully Hall last week. It was the first of two devoted to Schoenberg's quartets; Nos. 3 and 1 were played. (Nos. 2 and 4 and the early, unnumbered D-Major Quartet are due on May 5th.) Twenty years ago, the Juilliard taught me to love these compositions; their performances were revelatory in the way that Hans Rosbaud's of Schoenberg's orchestral music were. Once, this music had seemed forbidding, baffling; suddenly there shined a light, and there fell from my ears as there had been scales. The Juilliard recorded the quartets then, and it is announced that they are to record them again. Welcome news, for their performances are peerless.

The best modern recording at the moment is that of the LaSalle Quartet, in a splendid Deutsche Grammophon album that contains all the string-quartet music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. This Second Vienna School "cycle" the LaSalle have given live in many cities and are now giving in New York for the first time, also in Alice Tully Hall. (Two of the four concerts remain, on April 28th and May 1st.) The Juilliard Quartet and the LaSalle—both, incidentally, of Juilliard School origin—make an interesting contrast. The timbre of the LaSalle is exquisite—so sweet, pure, clear, and homogeneous that a listener is tempted to revel in the sounds and forget the sense. They played Berg's String Quartet, Webern's Six Bagatelles, and Schoenberg's First String Quartet. The Webern was bewitching; the players knew how (in the words of Schoenberg's foreword to his colleague's score) "to express a novel in a single gesture, a joy in a single breath." In the more robustly romantic Berg and Schoenberg, they drew fine, nervous lines but reduced the power of both pieces by working within a somewhat limited dynamic range; the Berg, which has *fff* and *ppp* markings in consecutive measures, calls for more violent contrasts. The LaSalle are aristocrats of this repertory (when four expert Viennese players banded as the Alban Berg Quartet, they travelled to Cincinnati to study with the LaSalle), and they perform it with all the delicacy, sensitivity, and polish of manner that the term implies. In Schoenberg, they to the Juilliard are rather what, in Beethoven, the Léner Quartet was to the Busch. The Juilliard interpretation of Schoenberg's First was bigger, stronger, and, I believe, deeper. "What wonderful playing!" one could exclaim after both performances, but it was Juilliard's that would more forcefully prompt the addition "And what wonderful music!"

The Juilliard have a new cellist—Joel Krosnick. He is a noble player, at once definite and subtle. If a single episode is to be pointed out, it might be the famous E-major melody of the adagio section, deemed by Schoenberg himself an "inspiration," delivered by Samuel Rhodes, the violist, and accompanied by the others (Mr. Krosnick holding a pedal point; Robert Mann and Earl Carlyss, the violinists, lulling in triplets) with a beauty that dissolved one into ecstasies. In control of colors, in cogency of discourse, in the balance of voices and the balance of form, in the molding of melodies, in the pacing of rhythms, in the carefully graded emphases given to harmonic events—in every way, to cut short the catalogue of merits, this was a performance that approached not merely the humanly attainable but the ideal. If I say "approached" rather than "achieved," it is only because toward the end of the long, sustained, and terribly demanding composition Mr. Mann seemed to be tiring a little, and then not all his contributions were quite true.

THE protagonist of Rossini's "Le Siège de Corinthe" is the chorus, which takes part in every number of the opera except one (a trio in Act III). This choral dominance is obscured in the new Metropolitan production of the opera, which has been mounted for the début there of Beverly Sills—as a vehicle for a remarkable soprano, supported by coloratura mezzo-soprano, tenor, and bass. It serves this purpose, but can hardly be said to serve the composer well. Rossini's opera becomes a decorative showcase for the prima donna. Sandro Sequi, who has staged it, handles the choirs as if they were part of the décor. Decoration of another kind has been plastered all over the vocal lines, often appropriately, in ways that Rossini would expect, but sometimes with ludicrous result. (When the heroine rushes in and sees an executioner's sword poised over her father, she adds to Rossini's tense exclamations a cascade of pretty twiddles.) The tenor of the show is on record as saying that with Rossini "You check your logic as you come in the door." He is wrong, but the Met edition of "Le Siège" bears him out; it has been assembled, by anonymous hands, with scant regard for either dramatic or musical logic.

Rossini composed his "Maometto II" (concerned with Mahomet the Conqueror, the captor of Constantinople) for Naples in 1820; it is an adventurous piece, with some remarkable innovations in form. Three years later, he refashioned it for Venice, adding some new music, and some old music from earlier operas, and providing a happy ending. Three years after that, he reworked "Maometto" as the lyric tragedy "Le Siège de Corinthe," the

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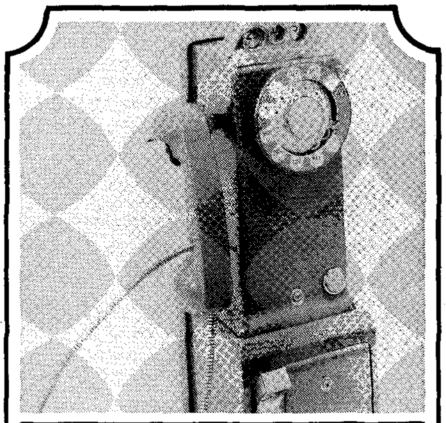

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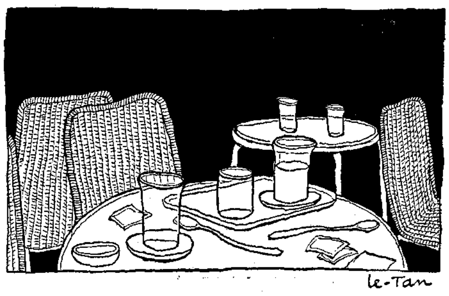
first of his three French *grands opéras.* The action was shifted from the shores of the Bosporus to Corinth a few years later; the besieged Venetian garrison became Greek; the young officer to whom the heroine is plighted, originally a contralto role, was rewritten for a tenor; the orchestration was amplified and the vocal lines simplified; new numbers were composed, old numbers were reordered in new forms, and some bravura arias for the soloists were dropped. The subject was topical. Two new Mahomets, the Sultan Mahmud II and the Pasha Mehmet Ali, now threatened Greece; at the time of "Le Siège," Athens itself was besieged. Two years earlier, Byron had died at Missolonghi. (Byron's "The Siege of Corinth," published in 1816, although dealing with the eighteenth-century sack of the town, shares with the opera not only its title but also the situation of the Corinthian governor's daughter being in love with the infidel captain; it may have been a contributory source to the plot of "Maometto II.") Today, it would be easy for a director of "Le Siège" to shove modern "relevance" in our faces by projecting scenes from present-day Cyprus, and film clips of helicopters lifting the survivors from a city about to fall. Such things are not needed. They would smash the stylistic mold of the opera. But what is needed—what was plainly intended by Rossini—is that the audience should be sympathetically stirred by the plight of a populace facing death and destruction, by heroic defiance, and despair, and the anguish of personal happiness destroyed by the disasters of war. The principals have no inner life but are mouthpieces for such emotions. A colleague describes the character of Pamira, the heroine, as "one-dimensional (not even that, really)"—which pretty well reduces it to vanishing point. But the music has substance—romantic, emotional, and dramatic substance. As the Victorian critic Henry Chorley once wrote, " 'Le Siège de Corinthe' contains music too noble to be forgotten."

In Italian translation, as "L'Assedio di Corinto," it has been revived in our day with success. The young Renata Tebaldi headed a cast in Florence in 1949, and in Rome two years later; Beverly Sills led the cast of a Scala production, in 1969, which marked her European début. The Metropolitan staging is an elaborated reconstruction of that performance; in addition to Miss Sills, it has the same conductor (Thomas Schippers), director (Sandro Sequi), designer (Nicola Benois), and Mahomet (Justino Díaz). Shirley Verrett has succeeded Marilyn Horne as Néoclès, the young officer (this tenor role is reclaimed, as it often was in the nineteenth century, by a mezzo-soprano), and Harry Theyard is the new governor, Cléomène (played by Franco Bonisolli at La Scala). The Met edition, still sung in Italian, is a mixture of "Maometto II," in both its Neapolitan and Venetian versions, and "Le Siège," together with a trivial Act II cabaletta for the heroine lifted from Rossini's early opera "Ciro in Babilonia," and a final cabaletta for her (by Mercadante? Pacini?) that Giuditta Grisi inserted into an 1829 performance. The principle of creating, for a Rossini revival, a performing text matched to the talents of the particular cast and to the circumstances of its production is unassailable. But in its practice the Met has erred, mainly on two counts. First, large cuts have been made that destroy carefully balanced forms and harmonic structures. For example, in the *introduzione* of Act I and the duet of Act II the second support of what was originally a symmetrical tonal arch has been kicked away. And a listener need not know the original score to feel that Mahomet makes his first entry with impossible abruptness; in fact, his opening recitative, the first section of his aria, and the orchestral introduction to his cabaletta have all been excised. Second, numbers have been introduced that weaken the musical and dramatic shape. The Grisi cabaletta, already mentioned, is one of them (in any case, it was written for the start of Act II, and so is doubly unwelcome in the Act III finale at a moment when, after Pamira's noble prayer, the action should rush to its close). Another such number is a trio from the Venice "Maometto;" redundant in "Le Siège," which already has four trios of its own, it clogs the progress of the third act, and is, moreover, a dramatic absurdity.

That said, one can praise the zest, enthusiasm, and, from the two ladies, high accomplishment with which the singers tackled their fancywork. Miss Sills looked beautiful, bore herself with dignity and pathos, and rippled through



her roulades with a facility that set the audience cheering. In the delivery of Rossini's simple, limpid melodies—such of them as remained—she was a shade less poignant than at La Scala, and some ill-judged final *acuti* were strident and untrue. But, all in all, this was a magnetic, virtuoso performance, vocally and dramatically of uncommon merit. Miss Verrett, sporting a Clark Gable mustache, looked rather silly, but she was dashing, lustrous in tone, fleet, energetic, and powerful in divisions. (Nevertheless, it was hard to banish memories of Miss Horne, who was vocally so astounding in the role; her performance of Néoclès' big scene—in a much longer version than Miss Verrett is allotted—is preserved on a London Records recital.) Mr. Theyard's tone was strained and disagreeable. Mr. Díaz's tone was commanding, but his coloratura was often no more than a blurry sketch of the notes. Much of "Le Siège" is ensemble—those five trios!—and of the four principals only Miss Verrett produced firm-focus, every-note-hit-plumb-in-the-center phrases (and she not always; vibrancy crept in under emotional pressure). So, especially in the "canonic" passages, the chording was not always pure, nor did one hear one line moving against the other with each interval beautifully defined. Since the opera was put on as a vocal (and scenic) display, not as a musical drama, only the highest vocal standards should be applied to any assessment.

Scenically, it looked very handsome. Mr. Benois's sets are in the "romantically neo-classical" manner of Alessandro Sanquirico, who designed the Scala première of the opera, in 1828. For the Met, Mr. Benois has provided a new Act II, which suggests the Sanquirico décor done over by Bakst. Mahomet's ships still form the backdrop to the piazza of the second scene. (Were they drawn there on the Diolcus? Although Nero began cutting the Corinth canal in 67 A.D., it opened to shipping only in 1893.) Mr. Schippers' conducting was lively and colorful. His only failing was to push some fast passages, including the allegro assai of the overture, at a speed faster than the players and singers could cleanly articulate them—almost as if daring his performers to get through at his tempi. The natural vigor of Rossini's music was thereby diminished, not enhanced.

The show is a success. Given Miss Sills and Miss Verrett, it could not fail to be. But it is not quite a worthy representation of the heroic opera that Rossini composed. —ANDREW PORTER

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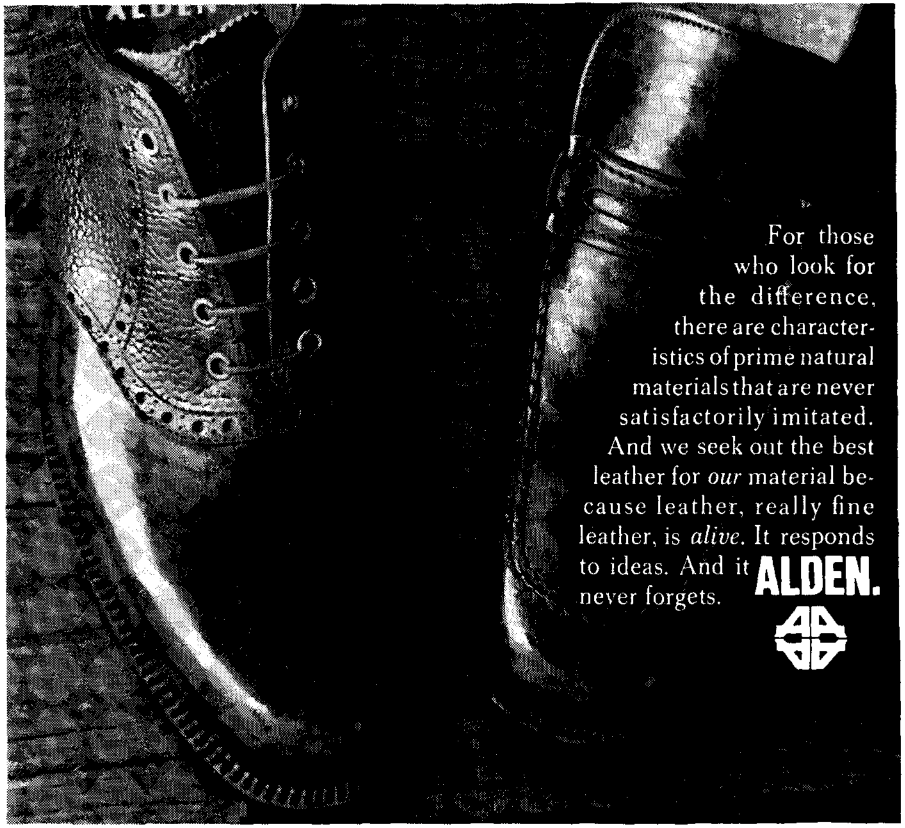

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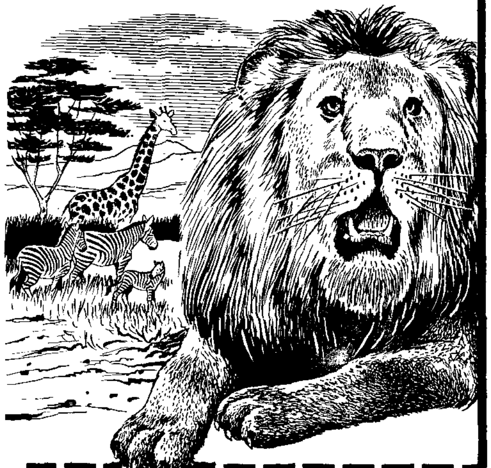

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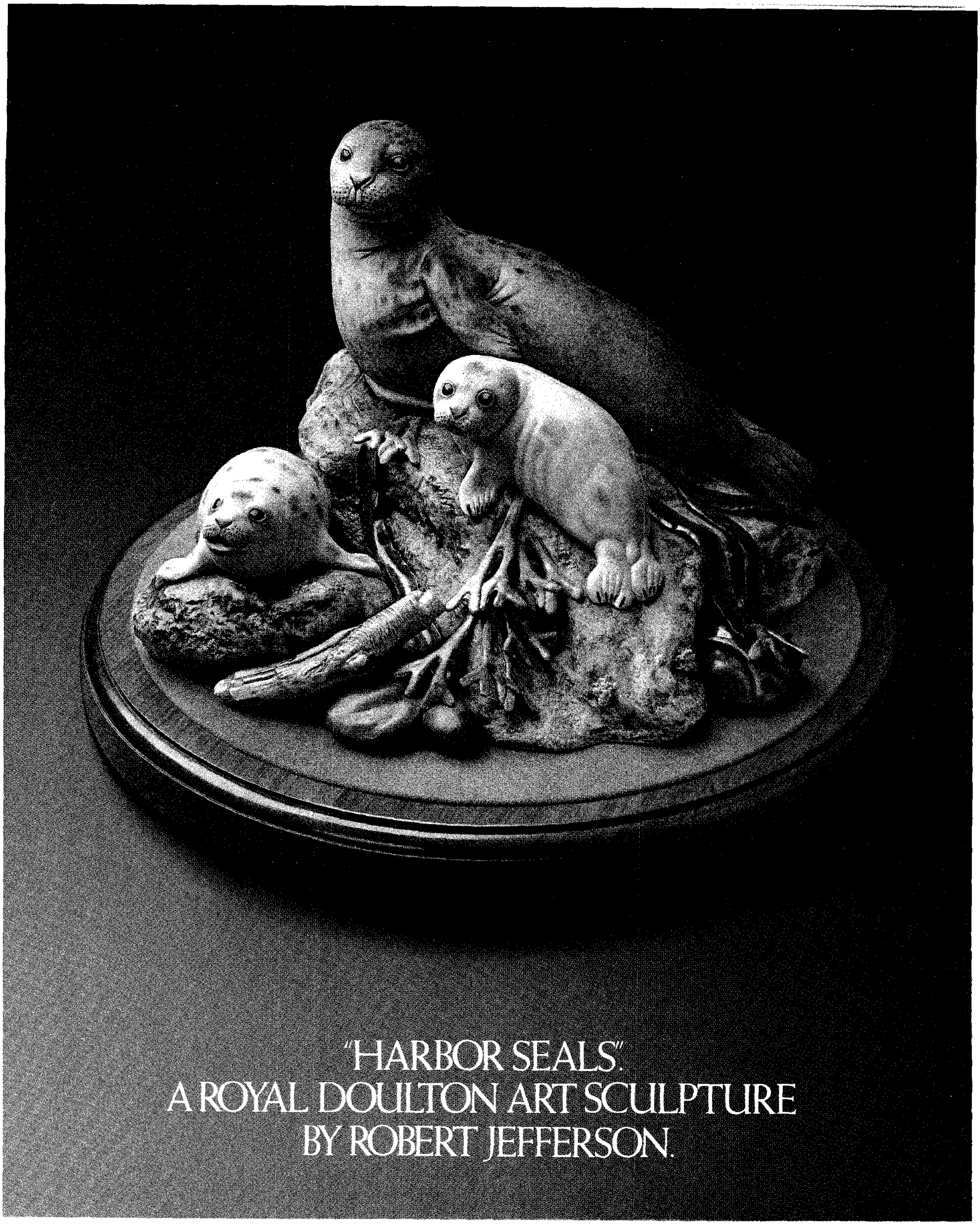

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DANCING

Going in Circles

TO Steve Reich's very interesting 1971 musical composition called "Drumming" Laura Dean has now set choreography for eight dancers, with results that are often pleasant and sometimes powerful. The dance, accompanied by Reich's musicians, had its première in the Lepercq Space at the Brooklyn Academy; the sound was wonderful. The dancing is not as interesting as the music, but for the first twenty minutes or so (the piece lasts ninety minutes) it exerts a pressure of naïve excitement that would be ideal if it could be sustained. The flaw in the dancing is that it tries to be a mirror image of the sound, and though the music and the dance are alike in the simplicity of their processes, they are widely divergent in their resources. Reich's score consists of a single rhythmic pattern enunciated in turn by bongo drums, marimbas, and glockenspiels; to each of these bands are added male and female vocalises, whistling, a piccolo; in the fourth and final section all voices and instruments are heard together. Since the instruments frequently play out of phase with each other and introduce further variations in pitch and timbre, the effect is sumptuous—a multilayered sonic veil of which the dance is only able to pick up two or three threads. And Dean's choreography is hampered by the fact that her dancers are not, all of them, as keen as they might be; they're enthusiastic performers, well rehearsed but not well trained in any sense comparable to the musicians, and in a piece of this size they can't stay the course. The most they contribute to "Drumming" as a dance event is a lightweight, peppy charm.

Laura Dean, as she says in her program note, has been experimenting for years with "spinning, steady pulse, repetitive movement, and geometric patterning." To take spinning first: it's the most favored of her devices and the least effective. Dance sociologists may be able to make something of the present moment, which finds so many American concert dancers behaving like whirling dervishes; for me, the whole business is a bore. As soon as a dancer or a group of dancers starts to spin, my attention immediately drops by half, then slides to total indifference. It's like waiting for someone to get off the phone and back to conversation. The first Western dancer I ever saw do this kind of spin was Ann Halprin, in a solo called, I believe, "The Prophetess." This was in 1955, and in those days even Halprin was conscious of borrowing from an exotic tradition. (Years before Halprin, Ted Shawn, in his "Mevlevi Dervish," was said to be the greatest spinner of them all.) Nowadays, concert dancers spin for the sake of spinning, as ballet dancers turn pirouettes. But, unlike a classical pirouette, a dervish spin has no reality as bodily sculpture; its entire emphasis is on the dancer's interior state, and the pleasure of it belongs to the dancer alone. When, to the marimba section of "Drumming," the Dean dancers go into their bobbin-like spins, their faraway trance corresponds to the remote whirr of the music, and their different bodily rhythms correspond to its multiplicity. But maintaining the spell becomes a problem for the spectator. There's no kinetic transference, and one has to struggle to keep the field of focus clear. Later on in the piece, there was more spinning—clockwise and counterclockwise, or in crouches, or with changing arms. No matter how Dean varied the visual pattern the *dance* effect was unintelligible.

What's surprising about these lapses into mystique is that they occur in the work of a choreographer whose other devices—"steady pulse, repetitive movement, and geometric patterning"—suggest a mathematically precise, even a severe turn of mind. But although she's one of the few really promising choreographers around, Laura Dean doesn't seem to have crystallized an attitude toward her work. She's rigid where she should be rigorous, slack where she should swing. From "Drumming" and from earlier works of hers that I've seen, I get the impression that she'd like to cut loose but can't—that she's trying for the kind of objectivity that will swallow her up. To lose oneself in one's work—is there a greater joy, especially for the performing artist? But Dean's choreographic range is so limited (by choice, it would seem) that as a performer she always looks as if she's holding something back. The few irreducibly basic steps to which she restricts herself—stamps, hops, shuffles, low kicks that barely part the legs—have the weight of intense scrutiny; only primary colors are used, and they're meant to burn us with their purity. In the early part of "Drumming," the dancing also had a brightness of temper that kept it from looking like a ritual, but planned primitivism seems to be what Dean's work is all about. It's a paradox not easy to survive gracefully, and Dean's tension shows in her neck and mouth. She's not one of the best dancers in the company. At least two of the others throw themselves about with more quasi-mystical rapture. Dean dances like an agnostic in her own church.

Dean's ambivalence is, just now, the most interesting thing about her. I hope it means that she'll develop her material (along with her dancers). The dance to "Drumming" is far from intricate, but portions of it are already a big advance from "Jumping Dance," "Stamping Dance," and "Circle Dance," which looked like games invented by the white settlers to keep the Indians amused. The question of why a dancer of intelligence and skill would ever want to hold herself down to such an elementary level can be answered by a glance at the formless attitudinizing, the tackily derivative contrivances that constitute so much modern choreography. But it's not the whole answer. Choreographers of Dean's generation are heirs to the radical experimentation of the sixties, which took Merce Cunningham's rejection of literary and psychological content in dance and inflated it into a revolt against all established forms of dance. The alternative to dance was nondance—or, rather, ordinary movement construed as dance. The idea was so shocking that it captured—and paralyzed—a whole generation. As Steve Reich has described the situation (in his book "Writings About Music"), "for a long time during the 1960s one would go to the dance concert where no one danced followed by the party where everyone danced." Nondance concerts persist in the seventies, only now they are likely to consist of stylizations of ordinary movement rather than the real, raw thing, and to take place on a considerably reduced scale. Just as sixties nondance paralleled Pop Art, seventies nondance parallels Conceptual or Minimal Art. The ordered elements in it often have the look of baby's first steps, which are repeated over and over in wonderment, as if choreographers hoped to discover for themselves the secret of why on earth man dances. Certain dancers have elected not to dance at all. Yvonne Rainer, the best-

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known of the sixties revolutionaries, has turned to filmmaking; the most recent concerts of Simone Forti and Kenneth King consisted of Forti and King reading. (Forti, widely acknowledged as a primary influence on the sixties radicals but seldom seen in performance, has amassed the biggest legend in absentia since Sybil Shearer.) The Grand Union, a group to which Rainer formerly belonged, counts among its current members Steve Paxton, David Gordon, Trisha Brown, Barbara Dilley, Nancy Lewis, and Douglas Dunn, all of them choreographers in semiretirement. An evening with Grand Union, like the one a few weeks ago at the La Mama Annex, is a free-for-all of improvised dialogue, shticks, and stunts, much of it funny on purpose, all of it inconsequential, none of it more than incidentally concerned with dancing. The format is so amorphous that no two performances are the same, and so discontinuous that no two descriptions of the same performance are, either. Grand Union is a slightly less conventional form of actors' *improvisational theatre;* its communal permissiveness makes it perfect campus-cabaret entertainment.

IMPLICIT in all this seems to be the idea that unless dancing can be taken back to an embryonic state (before there ever was a Martha Graham, a José Limón, or a Merce Cunningham to impose environmental influences) it cannot be done. The only trouble with this is that the embryo never grows. Two years ago, Lucinda Childs gave a baby-step concert at the Whitney Museum; last month, she gave another, at a downtown loft, in which two of the Whitney pieces were repeated. The new pieces were not much more elaborate. As before, four girls marched forward and backward in circles to a basic count of six. As before, Childs appeared alone to measure the space, walking a slow back-and-forth path, row upon row, until the floor area was covered. The walk was embellished at regular intervals with a turn of the body, a turn of the head, an extended arm. In the circle dance, once you'd observed the tiny variations in recovery of impetus with which each of the four girls switched from forward to backward march, you'd observed all. What made Childs' walk dance interesting (minimally speaking) was nothing organic to the dance; it was, rather, that Childs is a striking-looking woman with a beautiful head. Even in minimal, equalizing, white-on-white dances, those dreaded élitist prin-

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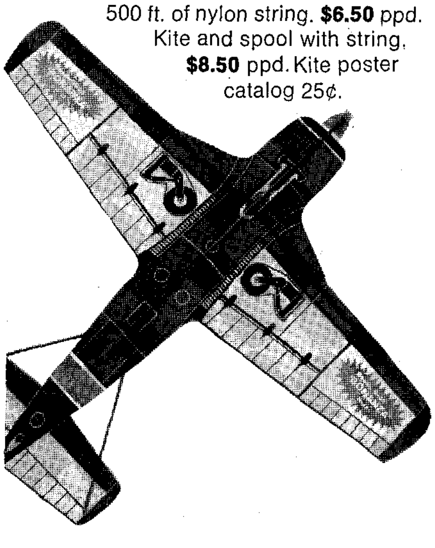

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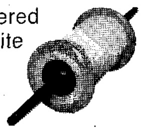

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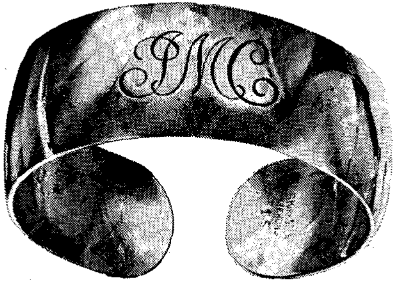

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ciples, that horrible star quality can't be ironed out. Like Dean, who in relaxed moments can look ravishing, Childs doesn't like to smile or look her audience in the eye. I was reminded of Rainer's mid-sixties manifesto of renunciation: "NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image . . ." Childs and Rainer are exact contemporaries who helped make a revolution. Ten years later, it's no to dance.

The embryo never grows because the dancers do not build on one another's accomplishments—they work on as if nobody had ever done anything. And the audience has no memory. In the seventies, the "new" and "radical" choreographers who are repeating the experiments of the sixties play to a predominantly young audience—an audience that, having heard of the firebrands of the sixties, now sits cross-legged in lofts and discovers the scene unchanged. (Laura Dean's audience for "Drumming" contained many people who were evidently drawn by the music; it was a refreshingly adult crowd.) And the young audience gets no help from the dance critics, who are either unaware or forgetful of developments in other forms of theatre. Kei Takei, a young Japanese dancer, recently put on a five-hour disaster epic called "Light" at the Brooklyn Academy. It was full of nameless terrors and indefinable threats, and it was acclaimed as original and visionary. But it might have been produced, scream for scream and grovel for grovel, by the Living Theatre. Doesn't anyone remember the Living Theatre?

Modern dance, American dance, contemporary dance, new dance, free dance, or avant-garde—however you call it, it's currently a scene of chaos and devastation. Laura Dean's use of recognizable dance movement is the first breakthrough it has witnessed since the emergence of Twyla Tharp. Dean has her problems; she's overly possessed by the rudimentary, and when she describes her experiences with spinning she sounds like Isadora discovering her solar plexus. Nevertheless, she's dancing, and she's composing dances of rhythm and pattern. She leaves the others standing still. —ARLENE CROCE

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LETTER FROM SAIGON

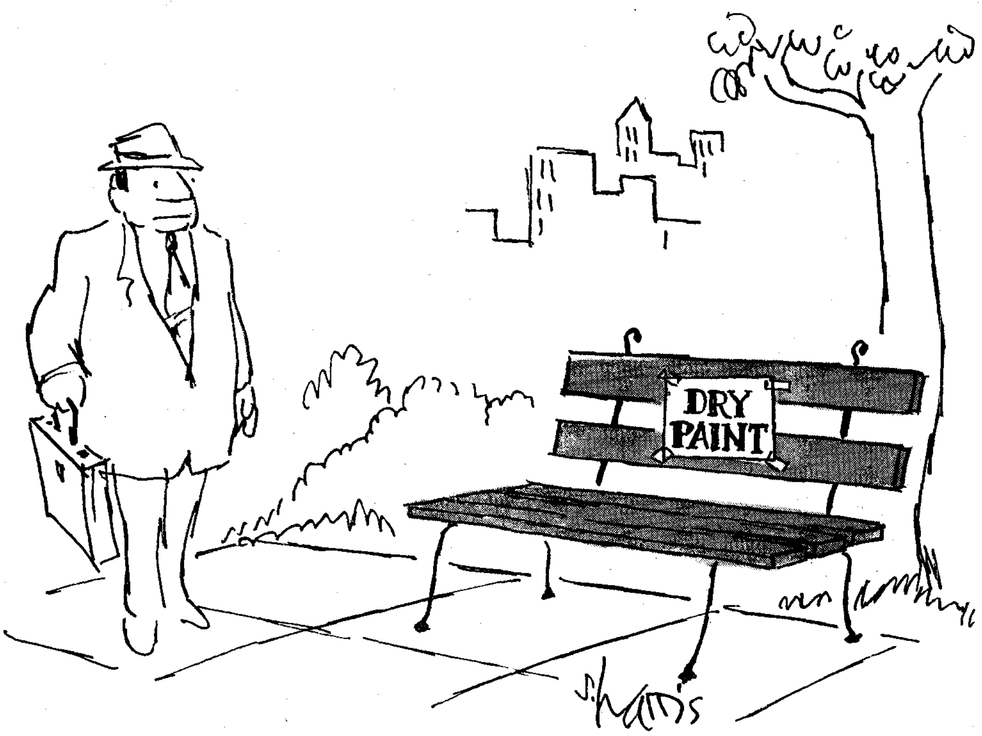
APRIL 14

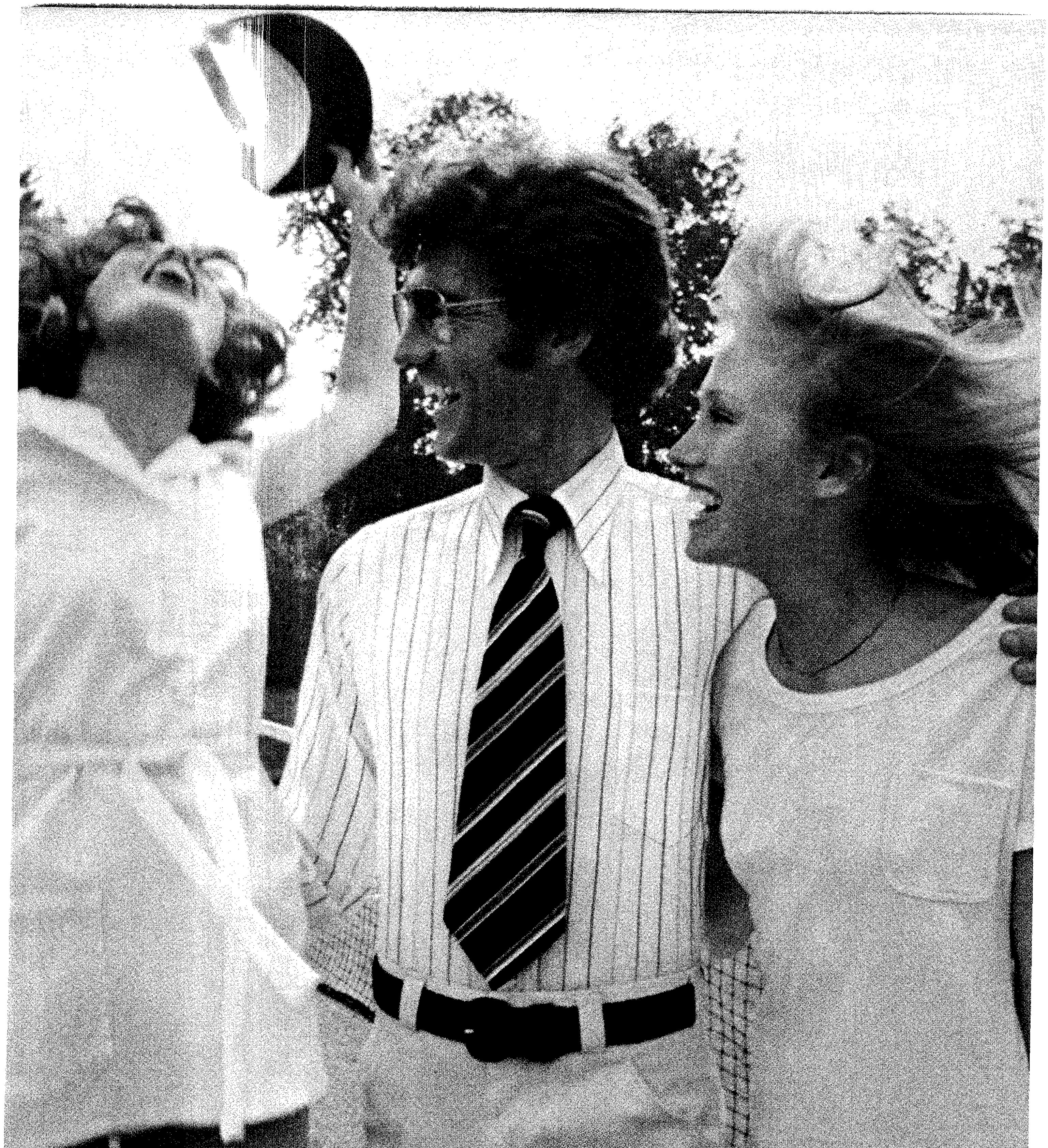
THIS capital of a lost cause, fatalistically awaiting the climactic hour of the thirty-year Indo-China war, can, at best, become a hostage for peace on predominantly Communist terms if the inept and unpopular Thieu regime is replaced by one that is prepared to negotiate and avoid further carnage. It is generally agreed here that the sooner this happens the better. The mood of the besieged city, now one of benumbed resignation, could easily give way to the panic and hysteria that marked the collapse of Danang and other cities in the past month if the Communists choose the option of outright capture—or simply if, as seems even more likely here than it ever did elsewhere, angry and despairing soldiers and citizens, with nowhere to flee, turn into rioting mobs and vent their spleen on each other and on the six thousand Americans nervously anticipating evacuation.

If one can believe what the Communists are saying in broadcasts from Hanoi and from the headquarters of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, they would now prefer to resort to political methods, by carrying out the terms of the Paris peace agreement of January, 1973—which, under the present circumstances, would soon produce a coalition government that they would readily dominate. Among other reasons for this expressed preference, the North Vietnamese have world opinion to consider, and the use of naked force, beyond limited efforts to intimidate Saigon's population by means of rocket and artillery attacks and street bombings, would very likely offend even their Russian supporters, who have quadrupled their aid to Hanoi since the first of the year. Hanoi (not to mention Peking or Moscow) is itself admittedly astounded by the swiftness of the Communist advance—or, more precisely, of the Thieu government's collapse—and there are some signs that the North Vietnamese leaders want to go slow and consolidate their grip on the major cities and the huge portions of the countryside they have captured: the whole including a vast human flood that by now amounts to a quarter or a third of the South's population of nearly twenty million. If the Saigon government chooses to fight, however, the Communists won't hesitate to use part of their tremendous force of some three hundred and fifty thousand—which, as a consequence of last month's debacle, is more than twice as large as the remaining units of the thoroughly demoralized and disorganized government forces—to seek a military solution. If that should happen, the conflict could quickly degenerate into chaos, both in the Saigon area and in the Mekong Delta, with whole battalions and regiments surrendering or deserting and others mutinying or fighting on without direction.

The final outcome will undoubtedly be the same in either case, for at this moment there seems little or no hope that the government can significantly turn the tide. The most it can do, with the stocks of ammunition and other supplies it still has, is to bargain for time militarily while it tries to create a political framework for negotiations—and a good part of those supplies are bound to be blown up by Communist rockets and shells poured into government supply areas such as the huge ones at Bien Hoa and Long Binh, just north of Saigon, even as the United States frantically rushes more ammunition previously allocated by Washington and now in transit. Any additional American aid (in the unlikely event that Congress should respond at all to President Ford's newest request) would serve no purpose in the absence of strong concomitant American pressure on President Thieu to prepare for negotiation—most realistically, by removing himself from the scene. So far, there seems to have been little or no progress in that direction. A number of ranking South Vietnamese military officers, led by Air Vice-Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, the former Vice-President and Prime Minister, and General Cao Van Vien, the head of the Joint General Staff, are eager to form a new staff committee to rally the forces that the government still has at its command—roughly seven divisions, or half of what it had a month ago. But these men have not proved capable, individually or collectively, of forcing the stubborn hand of Thieu, who has persisted in issuing orders personally as Commander-in-Chief. In a recent speech, he blamed everyone but himself for the March rout of government troops in the northern and central parts of the country, but it was he who was in fact largely responsible for the confusion that led to panic and flight in the Central Highlands and then in the Hué-Danang region, with the ensuing collapse of the northern and central coastal provinces. "The President treated his corps commanders like corporals," one chagrined staff officer told me. "No wonder we fell into chaos."

As the generals have made it increasingly clear, privately and publicly, that they want Thieu to resign, or, at least, to delegate his military powers to them, a growing number of opposition politicians, representing a wide spectrum of political and religious opinion, have joined forces in calling for Thieu to quit, or, at least, to step into a figurehead role and allow them to form a so-called Peace Cabinet, which the Communists would find acceptable as a negotiating body. Sooner or later, something like this is likely to happen: the danger is that the process will take too long. Thieu's response so far has been a typical one: he has just listened im-





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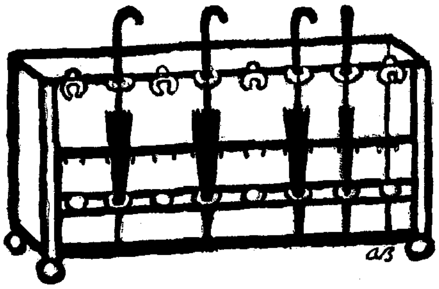
passively to the arguments of these groups and pretended to agree about the need for a strong new governing body, and has meanwhile arrested those he regards as most bothersome and has employed others as instruments for scaring off the opposition leaders, both military and political. Early this month, he named as his new Prime Minister the mediocre, if pleasant, Nguyen Ba Can, who until now has been the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and who is functioning as a mere mouthpiece for the President. The continuing confusion and indecision—a state of affairs, endemic to South Vietnamese society which the French here used to call *immobilisme*—serve the Communists' purpose as they draw the noose tighter around the capital. They are adamantly insisting that Thieu retire completely from the scene, and are intimating that they also want all—and they emphasize *all*—Americans out of Vietnam, before they will consider any talk of peace. The latter condition seems more likely to be imminently met as one ponders what President Ford really meant by setting an April 19th deadline for congressional action.

THE official American establishment, belatedly preparing an evacuation plan and talking vaguely of arranging to get as many as two hundred thousand Vietnamese "friends" out of the country, without having any idea of how this can be done logistically, is in a schizoid state. Over many years in Vietnam, I have from time to time reported varying schools of thought in our Embassy—including anti-Washington views, expressed by some who were regarded officially as "young Turks"—but for the most part the prevailing view has solidly favored backing whatever government was in power here, however ineffective and corrupt—for the last eight years, Thieu's. Now, as Thieu's star is ingloriously fading, and the last hopes that the Vietnamese could put up a good fight against the Communists have been blasted, Americans who have been here for several years are wringing their hands. "Have we been kidding ourselves all along about the abilities of Vietnamese soldiers?" one of them asked ruefully—and, it seemed, rhetorically. "We should have asked ourselves long ago how an army can go on functioning when it is simply a business organization, in which everything is for sale, from what you eat to a transfer or a promotion. We never encouraged the Vietnamese forces to fight aggressively, to take the offensive. We fought the war for them and made them overdependent on air support. We prepared them for conventional war when the Communists were fighting unconventionally, and then, when the Communists finally adopted conventional tactics, the South Vietnamese didn't know what to do. The fact that they have no leadership is largely our fault; we made them followers, so successfully that even the soldiers who were willing to fight got killed or wounded as a result of incompetence, or lost by default. The North Vietnamese have succeeded because their generals and their officers are leaders."

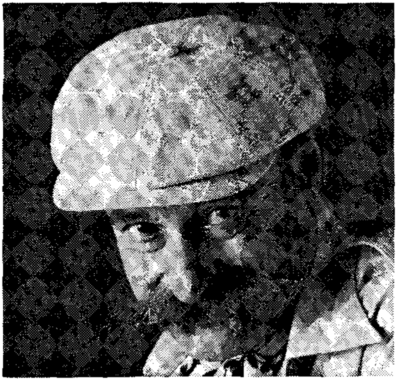
Politically, American policy here is bankrupt. Too late—far too late—the more realistic American officials have come to admit that Thieu must go. But most of them would still like to see him "phased out" in polite stages, and that is simply not feasible if lives are to be spared. Hanoi and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, having checkmated Thieu's government militarily and satisfied themselves that the Americans are not going to start bombing again, and that no more aid, or not enough, will be forthcoming, are now in a position to checkmate Thieu's government politically, too. Most South Vietnamese, including many friends of mine who have been opposed to Thieu for years, still plaintively maintain that only the Americans can tell Thieu to leave. What these people do not realize is that Thieu, seeing the handwriting on the wall, cares far less than he once did about what the Americans tell him. He feels he was betrayed, in the first place, by the Paris peace agreement, which we made him sign, and then by the failure of the Americans to live up to our promises afterward—especially our failure in recent months to replace his lost weapons and other equipment on a one-to-one basis, as originally specified in the agreement. Whatever merit there is in his case against the Americans, he seems determined to hang on as long as he can. His attitude and that of his ever-dwindling but still busily scheming entourage is simply one of "*Après moi, le déluge*."

THE net effect of this, in both the Embassy and the Presidential palace, is catatonic. But in recent years, and especially the past year or two, I have increasingly come to feel that everything that happens in Vietnam is phantasmagoric, and that it has all happened before—all, that is, except the vast human tragedy now unfolding. And even this, of course, has been going on for a long time, at a different tempo, but now, at the moment of abject defeat, the futility of everything that has taken place here is being driven home more sharply by the frantic flights for survival, the pell-mell surges of huge numbers of refugees in every direction, the hasty dispatch of orphans abroad—climaxed by the awful air crash outside the Saigon airport—and, in general, the separation and destruction of whole families of innocent city folk and country folk as anger and bitterness have suddenly boiled over.



Compassion, cynicism, and fatalism are oddly mixed in what is happening—and there has been a blinding revelation of the South Vietnamese character, which was always so difficult to define, because it was compounded of many varying qualities, stemming from regional, religious, and political differences, and was seemingly possessed of a hopelessly divisive spirit. The North Vietnamese, less burdened by these handicaps, organized themselves effectively, after 1945, into a Communist state under the astute and tough leadership of Ho Chi Minh and his small group of dedicated lieutenants. The Southerners, forced to accommodate nearly a million refugees from the North after the end of the French Indo-China War, in 1954, never really mixed well with the newcomers or understood their differing psychologies and motivations. All of the people here, whether indigenes or newcomers—Buddhists, Catholics, the tribal mountain people, members of the main Southern religious sects, the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai—constantly suspected and opposed each other, socially and politically. The only thing they had in common was the urge for survival, which, as time has proved, has no common national denominator. "None of us has any pity anymore," one of my close Vietnamese friends has remarked to me.

Another Vietnamese friend, who has travelled around the country for years, in and out of contested and Communist areas as well as within Saigon's territory, sat in my room for an hour the other day and kept shaking his head and muttering the single word "Bizarre." Some of Thieu's bitterest opponents have now simply disappeared, and when I asked one of those who were still free



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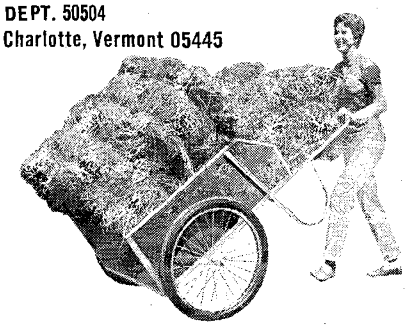

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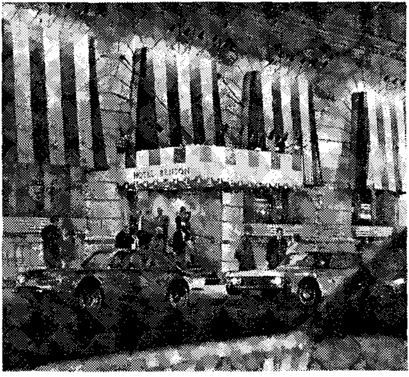
how many such people had so far been apprehended, he replied, with a grim smile, "The latest official figure is one." A young deputy minister recently brought back from Paris to serve here—an example of the sort of well-trained and zealous bureaucrat-scholar who should have been employed by the government years ago—said with little visible emotion but with an uncertain smile, "I'm really very young." He didn't have to complete the sentence by adding "to die."

The South Vietnamese, being a poetic and romantic people, are talking more and more about "loneliness." And one of them, sitting in the café across the street from my hotel, a café that has always been a fount of rumors and of considerable information as well, commented, "There is nothing behind me, nothing on either side, and what I see in front I can neither face nor defeat." Such feelings of helplessness are nevertheless complemented, for the most part, by a resigned determination to stay here and see things through. The only people who have fled so far are, inevitably, those with a lot of money. (A passport and an exit visa cost ten thousand dollars in bribes at the current black-market rate.) People who have worked for the Americans or have been closely associated with them will be among the first to be punished, perhaps killed, by the Communists—and there seems little we can do to get them all out in time—but they are rationalizing their fate without much bitterness or self-pity. "There is no longer any justification for our lives," said another man at the café table. "The fact that we are still alive doesn't mean anything." The father of a family of Northerners living here, who has been politically active all his life and is under police surveillance, and who will surely be in deeper trouble when the Communists come, said recently, "We can only expect the worst and hope for the best. My wife and I are unimportant, but I hope someone will take care of our children." He added, not looking at me, "Unfortunately, they are not orphans."

Perhaps the strangest thing is that, until one really looks beneath the surface, daily life in Saigon continues much as before. For a few days, there were lines of people in front of the banks to withdraw money, but these disappeared when the government announced that cash was plentiful. (It could simply print more banknotes if it had to.) Rumors that foreign embassies were issuing visas have sent crowds scurrying to their doors like



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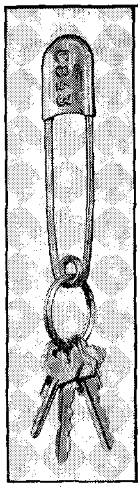

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lemmings, but when the reports have proved false the people have returned impassively to their jobs. Thousands of *cyclo* drivers have been banished from the streets by the police, who claim that many were Vietcong agents, but the hordes of cars, Hondas, and bicycles continue to jam up, and the sidewalks are awash with the usual pedestrian flow, including scores of beggars, homeless children, and prostitutes (the ranks of the last now suddenly and puzzlingly augmented by younger and prettier girls). The restaurants are fuller than they have been for several years, because of the influx of foreign correspondents. The flower stalls are still open, though the flowers are less plentiful and seem to fade more quickly. The city responds to a crisis—as it always has—with hidden reflexes, and then lapses back into its ordinary pace. On the morning of April 8th, when a lone dissident pilot in an American-made F-5 fighter-bomber zoomed low and dropped bombs alongside the Presidential palace—coming nowhere near Thieu, the obvious target—the crowds watched in fascination, took momentary shelter in doorways, and were back at work within five minutes. An hour later, when public loudspeakers blared the announcement that a twenty-four-hour curfew had been imposed by the palace, people took their time going home, and at three o'clock, when the curfew was suddenly lifted, they all came out again. "Saigon is the only city in the world where a twenty-four-hour curfew lasts five hours," someone said.

FOR the Communists, who are reported to have several hundred sappers and other agents already hiding in the city and perhaps five thousand more planted in the outskirts, Saigon remains the final plum to be picked, the symbol of all they have fought for so long to defeat. For them, things have come full circle. Thirty years ago, in August and September of 1945, they briefly held this capital, until British occupation troops, followed by the returning French, threw them out into the jungle, and the guerrilla war started. When I first arrived here, in June, 1946, the guerrilla leaders I spoke with were convinced that they would eventually take over the whole country, but I doubt whether any of them—and most of them are probably long since dead—realized that it would take so long and cost so many hundreds of thousands of lives, Vietnamese, French, American, and Korean, among others. Certainly none of them could have imagined that victory would be won by

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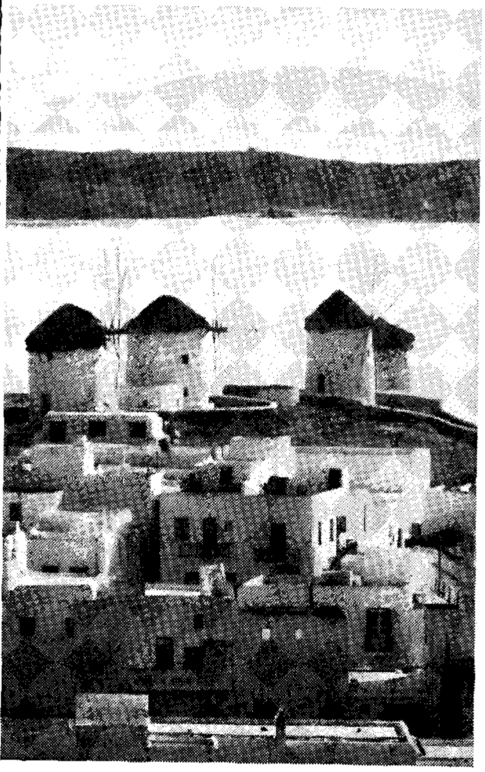

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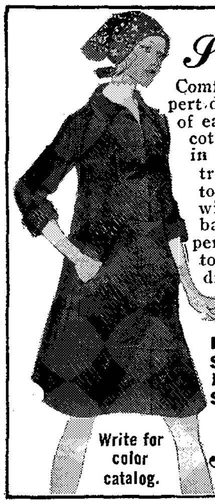

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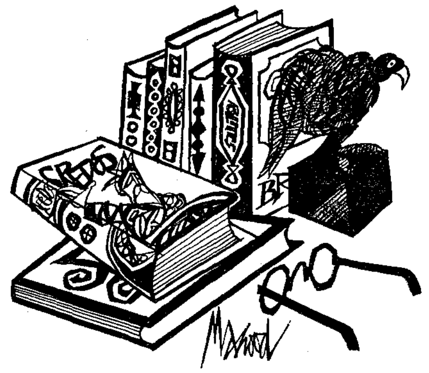
Vietnamese and Western analysts believe they have pieced together the present Communist plan of action, which one expert has described as "aggression by improvisation." As far back as last August, the analysts say, the Communist command in the South, known as COSVN (Central Office for South Vietnam), began formulating a long-range plan for what then appeared to be a limited general offensive, and in November and December the Hanoi top command sorted out the options more carefully at a meeting of the Twenty-third Party Plenum. The plan as it was set forth had three phases. The first phase was a series of attacks in the Delta and against the province of Phuoc Long, northeast of Saigon. It was decided that the attackers should move carefully, and that the American response should be closely observed. Phuoc Long fell early in January—the first of eighteen South Vietnamese provinces to be captured thus far. The reaction in Washington was far less strong than the Communists had feared. Two weeks before Phuoc Long was taken, General V. G. Kulikov, Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, visited Hanoi, and the Russians then determined on a fourfold increase in military aid. The top North Vietnamese command, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap and his deputy, General Van Tien Dung, with Dung directly in charge of the campaign, ordered the start of their second phase—an attack on the city of Ban Me Thuot, in the Central Highlands. The battle there began before dawn on the tenth of March. Some of the government troops fought well—most notably one regiment of the 23rd Division—but the city fell to the Communists in three days. A retreat eastward to the coast began in orderly fashion, mostly in trucks and cars, and on the first day eighty miles was covered. But the retreat bogged down fifty miles from the coast, where a bridge that had been damaged several years ago had to be repaired. With food and water short, fighting broke out between undisciplined government Rangers and local townspeople. Then elements of the 320th North Vietnamese Division began pouring artillery fire into the rear of the column, and panic started. Many people were killed or wounded, and it took the stragglers a week to cover the fifty miles to the coast; huge amounts of equipment, including tanks and guns, were abandoned.

The day after the fall of Ban Me Thuot, President Thieu met with his top commanders in Saigon, and again the next day at Cam Ranh, on the coast. Thieu set forth a strategic concept that involved the possible abandonment of the lightly populated, Communist-dominated provinces of Pleiku and Kontum, to the north of Ban Me Thuot, which is the capital of Darlac Province. The corps commander concerned, General Pham Van Phu, received Thieu's statement as a tactical order and started the withdrawal at once. The evacuation, joining that from Darlac Province, brought the number of refugees and retreating troops to probably over a hundred thousand—up to that time the largest evacuation of the war. Strategically, Thieu's order made sense, since the government forces were obviously spread too thin in the face of the heavy influx of North Vietnamese troops. (Between the start of the year and last week, a hundred and forty thousand men arrived from the North.) But the government's tactical-command structure fell apart. The Communists, who had planned to go next into Tayninh Province, on the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon, now changed their tactics and decided to strike heavily in the north, at Hué and Danang. They were probably impelled partly by Thieu's sudden decision to withdraw an airborne division southward and use it as a reserve for the defense of Saigon and the surrounding areas—a move that an American here likened to "a man going broke from carrying too much life insurance." The South Vietnamese commander in the north, General Ngo Quang Truong, who has been regarded as the best general in South Vietnam (he is now hospitalized in Saigon in a state of shock), warned Thieu that he couldn't defend both Hué and Danang, because he was outnumbered three to two. He suggested that, although Hué had a sentimental value as the old imperial city, Danang was more important. Thieu at first agreed. But



then Thieu reversed himself and ordered two divisions moving south toward Danang—the Marines and the 1st Division—to turn back toward Hué. The Marines obeyed his order, but the troops of the 1st Division refused. The Communists took swift advantage of the confusion, and the worst panic of the war broke out as soldiers fought refugees to get out of Danang by road, by sea, or by air. Soldiers shot civilians who were blocking their way as they tried to board planes, and sometimes shot each other in struggles to climb onto barges and escape by water. No one thought any longer of making a stand. By the end of the month both Hué and Danang were gone, and the chain reaction that led to the quick collapse of the coastal provinces to the south had begun. The cluttered coastal highway was described by one of the evacuating Americans as Debacle Road.

The Communists, surprised by their easy victories (they have lost very few men in this whole campaign), once again had to improvise to keep up with events. By now, they felt fairly confident that the Americans would not intervene, or send much more aid, if any, to South Vietnam, and the assurances they were getting from the Russians of increased supplies had been bolstered after a visit to Hanoi, late in February, by Nikolai Firyubin, a Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister. Some analysts of Communist affairs have suggested, incidentally, that Firyubin's visit resulted in a tacit agreement between Hanoi and Moscow that the Russians, in return for their increased aid to North Vietnam, would be allowed to play a greater role thenceforward in Cambodia, so as to counter the Chinese role there. At any rate, Moscow shortly thereafter recognized Prince Norodom Sihanouk's revolutionary regime in Peking and in Cambodia, finally withdrawing its recognition from the now fallen Lon Nol government. Moscow obviously wants to reëstablish its credentials in Cambodia, and to obtain the coöperation of Hanoi, which holds a heavy military as well as political hand over the heads of the Khmer insurgents. In March, too, a Chinese delegation visited North Vietnam, but little is known about what the Chinese were up to; the chances are that they were at least as worried about what the Russians were doing as about the speed of the North Vietnamese offensive.

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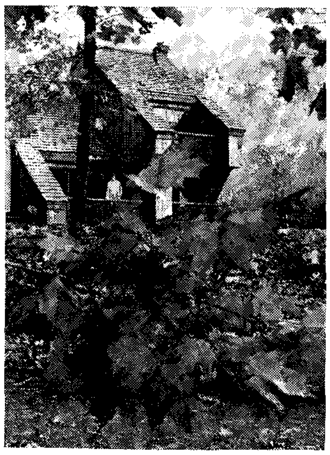

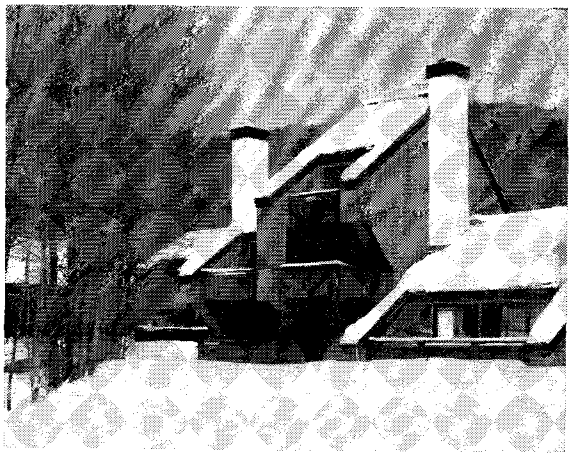

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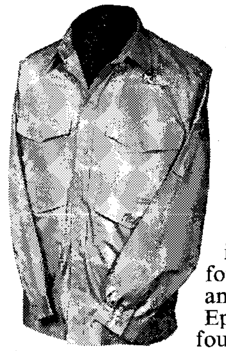

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is given—are not likely to pause too long, unless the Thieu government is ousted and negotiations begin. In fact, simply because they have all along been afraid of the American response, they may at this stage be prompted to move even more quickly against Saigon. Their immediate strategy and tactics are apparently directed against the northeastern and northwestern approaches to the capital and toward grabbing some key cities and areas in the Delta to the south (notably the provinces of Long An and Dinh Tuong, just south of Saigon, and Kien Tuong, to the west) in order to cut off the main roads to the city and interdict the river routes to the coast. If the Thieu forces can hold on both south and north of the city, this final part of the campaign, which constitutes the third phase of Hanoi's plan, could continue for the several remaining weeks of the dry season and on into the rainy season, which will start at the end of May. At the moment, their successful defense of Xuan Loc, to the northeast, has given them some encouragement. A number of Western military analysts, however, expect an attack of some sort on Saigon, including a Communist effort to close down the airport, within two or three weeks.

As for the Thieu government, having lost nearly half of its main divisions, large additional elements of Rangers and other groups, untold numbers of Territorial and local forces, and somewhere between seven hundred million and a billion dollars' worth of equipment, as well as half of its Air Force, it has its back tightly against the wall, even with less territory to defend. The preponderance of North Vietnamese strength is now, as one American says, "so overwhelming as to be ludicrous." Hanoi now has eighteen Northern divisions in the country, and has begun to bring in helicopters to the Danang area, as well as elaborate equipment for ground-air communications—presumably for use with jet fighters. As for the Vietcong, their strength is back up to a hundred thousand troops, plus forty to fifty thousand political workers. (Since the Paris ceasefire, the Southern Communists, who had been whittled down to a main force of about forty thousand three years ago, have been recruiting at the rate of four thousand a month.) And in the past few weeks the North Vietnamese have sharply stepped up a recruiting program of their own, in case they need still more men, or perhaps in order to prepare for military rule of the South, at least temporarily, after the war ends.

The Communists' conquest of about

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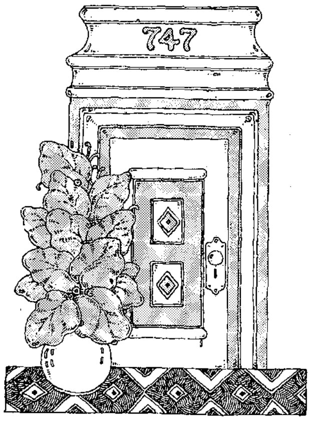

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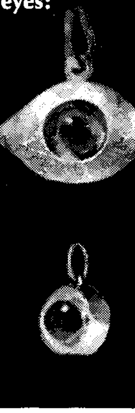

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three-fifths of South Vietnam has proceeded so fast that it is too soon to discern clearly the pattern of occupation and takeover. Much of the territory seized is sparsely inhabited, and in many areas refugees and disorganized troops are still attempting to escape southward. However, the victors have moved quickly, especially in cities such as Hué and Danang, to set up new revolutionary administrations, which generally consist of a People's Revolutionary Committee, a Military-Political Committee, and a Military Management Committee. In some places, a National Council for National Reconciliation and Concord, such as the Paris agreement provides for, has also been created, or else a branch of the National Reconciliation Force—which is the name of an established lay Buddhist group in Saigon, and elsewhere, that has been in favor of ending the war and negotiating under the Paris pact. The structure of the three basic committees is reminiscent of the old Vietminh organizations established in the South between 1946 and 1954, and members of revolutionary committees that were created by the Communists over the past several years in all South Vietnamese provinces have now surfaced and are playing important roles. In such places as Danang, some special committees have been organized for municipal and other workers. Immediately after the Communists took Danang, a twenty-four-hour curfew was announced, but this was soon lifted as efforts were made to get people back to work and to reopen markets and schools.

The Communists are taking full advantage of their highly developed propaganda techniques, using loudspeaker trucks to exhort the population and call meetings of teen-agers, women, and so on. In fact, in those places where they simply walked in after the government troops had fled they captured the cities and towns with virtually nothing except loudspeakers and a few tanks and truckloads of troops. But there are indications that they are worried about maintaining order in the face of possible opposition, and in a number of cities, notably Danang, they have sent in special security troops from North Vietnam and augmented them with anti-aircraft units. It has obviously been impossible to take control overnight of every facet of life, such as communications, and there have been cases of people in Danang telephoning their families and friends in Saigon to say they were safe. On the other hand, broadcasts of the P.R.G.'s Liberation Radio

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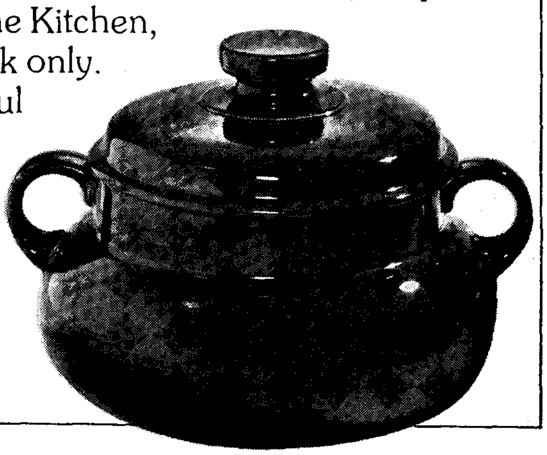

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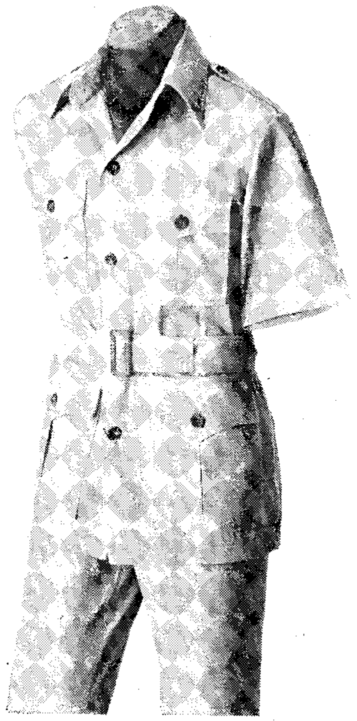

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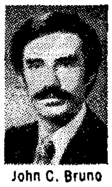

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are constantly beamed throughout the country, emphasizing the effectiveness of the takeover and describing the "warm reception" accorded the victorious Communist troops. (One such broadcast quoted a fishwife in the market of Danang proudly proclaiming to buyers, "This is not colonial fish, it is liberation fish.") In recent days, broadcasts in the Saigon area, denouncing Thieu and the Americans, have been stepped up. "Let all our compatriots take the initiative in getting together in order to protect their lives and property and be ready to participate in the revolutionary movement that is raging like a storm," one of these broadcasts said. "No matter how shrewd and cruel it may be, and despite the U.S. imperialists' efforts to breathe life into it, the puppet Thieu clique can in no way reverse the situation, nor can it save its rotten self."

The basic policy of the Communists, set forth in a ten-point statement that the P.R.G. issued on April 1st, is constantly rebroadcast. It stresses the importance of eradicating the "ruling apparatus" of the old regime, including political parties, although, it explains, "public officials who worked for the puppet machinery are allowed to continue to work under the revolutionary administration and must correctly implement its policies and lines." It asserts that "democratic liberties" and religious freedom are to be insured. "National reconciliation and concord" are to be effected, but the establishment of order and security is stressed even more strongly, and there are warnings that all those who "oppose the revolutionary administration will be severely punished." The property of the Saigon regime will be taken over by the P.R.G., but private business can continue if it is "beneficial to national plans and the people's livelihood." Peasants will be encouraged to resume agricultural production as quickly as possible. Cultural and scientific activity will be allowed to continue, except that "all reactionary, depraved, and brain-poisoning organizations and activities of the U.S. imperialists and the puppet administration are banned." The lives and property of "foreigners," apparently including local Chinese, are to be safeguarded. Government officers and troops will be welcomed and will receive help if they genuinely admit the error of their ways, "but those who resist the revolution will be seriously punished." While it is apparent that the new regime intends to tread lightly at first, it has left little doubt that it will eliminate all opposition ruthlessly. There have already been reports of some killings in several cities, where government police, tax collectors, war profiteers, and recalcitrant bureaucrats have been among the targets previously announced. Once in full control, the Communists are expected to move toward a tougher program and policy.

THE Southern member of the P.R.G. most likely to head a new regime or to be chief P.R.G. representative in a coalition government is a former Saigon architect of about sixty named Huynh Tan Phat, who was born in My Tho, in the Delta. He studied at Hanoi University and later returned to Saigon, where he designed a number of houses and office buildings, still to be seen there. He joined the Resistance in 1945 and has since been in the jungle or at various P.R.G. headquarters—most recently at Loc Ninh, near the Cambodian border, which the Communists have held for more than two years. About ten years ago, his wife, who had been imprisoned under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, was exchanged for an American prisoner, and joined him. At present, Phat, a soft-spoken, amiable man, holds three jobs. He is Prime Minister of the P.R.G., General Secretary of the National Liberation Front (which was established in 1960, nearly a decade before the P.R.G.), and a member of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party, the Southern adjunct of the Laodong (Workers') Party of North Vietnam. Sharing power with him will probably be Nguyen Huu Tho, a former Saigon lawyer, who is slightly older, and who heads the National Liberation Front. Other important Communist figures in the South are Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, the P.R.G.'s Foreign Minister; Trinh Dinh Thao, also a onetime Saigon lawyer, who is head of the Alliance of National and Peace Forces, set up at the time of the 1968 Tet attack; and Tran Buu Kiem, a high-ranking official who has direct ties with the Laodong Party in the North. Hanoi's two top supervisors of the Southern political operation will undoubtedly be Pham Hung, who was born in the South and has been its chief representative there for many years but is now in Hanoi, and Le Duc Tho, who conducted the Paris negotiations with Henry Kissinger. Both are members of the North Vietnamese Politburo.

Assuming that a coalition government is arranged by a Saigon Peace Cabinet—and even some hard-line politicians in Saigon privately agree that, barring a miraculous military re-

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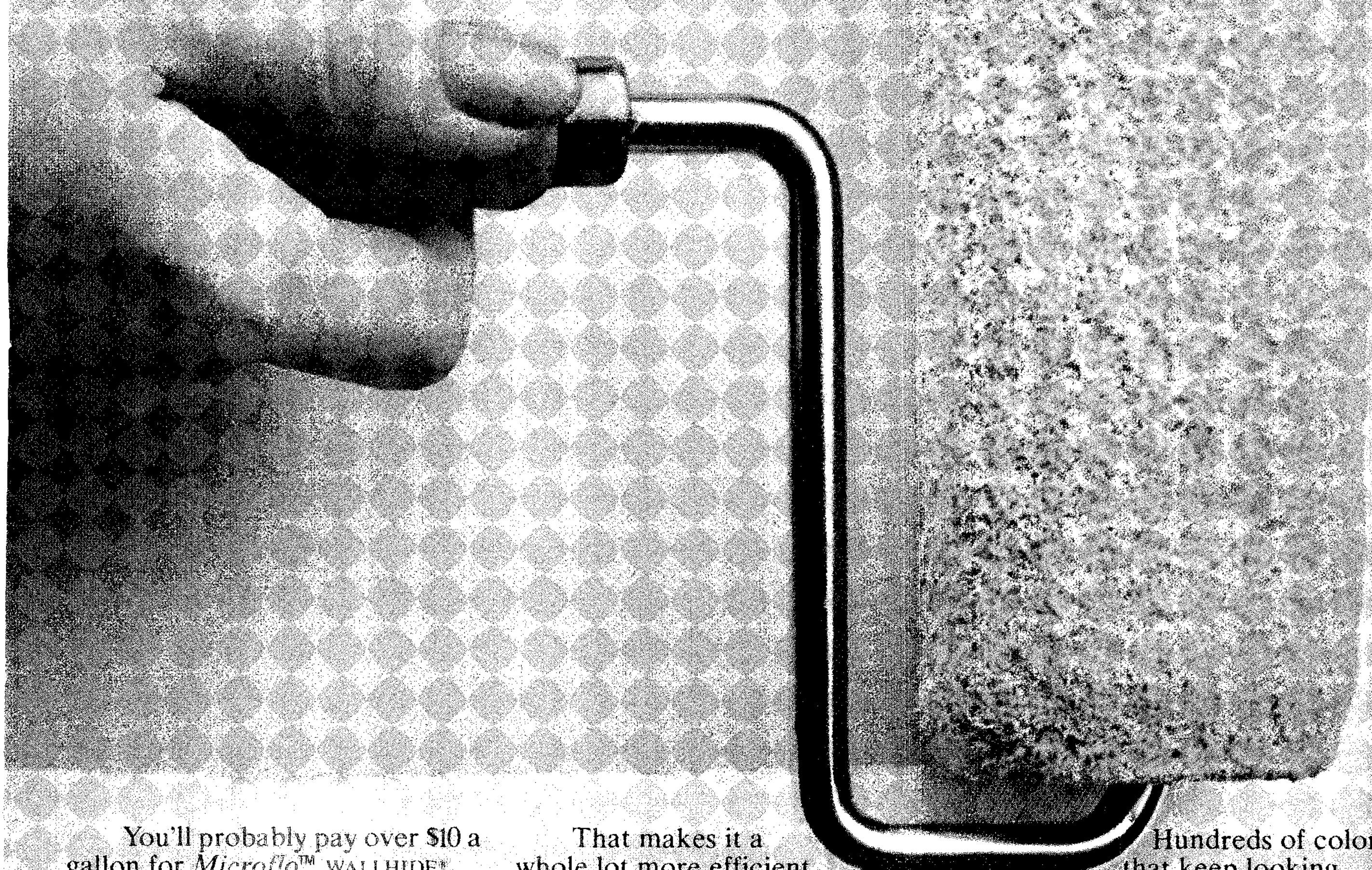

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covery, such a government could talk only in terms of "disguised surrender"—the Communists will undoubtedly have a veto over the selection of the Saigon representatives. For the moment, the man that a group of behind-the-scenes mediators in Saigon favor to head a Peace Cabinet is Tran Van Do, a quiet septuagenarian and former Foreign Minister, who negotiated on behalf of the Saigon faction at Geneva in 1954. Starting last February, Do and a mixed group of political figures tried to consolidate "third force" elements in the South and convince Thieu that he had to compromise for the country's salvation. Do, accompanied by the labor leader Tran Quoc Buu and by Bui Diem, former Ambassador to the United States, met with Thieu in mid-March, and, as is his way, Thieu seemed to agree with what they said, and asked them for a memorandum, which he was given but which he never acknowledged. On March 25th, 26th, and 27th, Do and his fellow-mediators met with a score or more opponents of Thieu (exclusive of the Buddhists, who continue to play their own role in pursuing peace) at Tan Son Nhut, Saigon's airport. Former Vice-President Ky attended the first meeting and pledged his coöperation, but he expressed himself as being firmly against a coup—a view he subsequently publicized at a press conference. Ky, whom I have seen twice in the past week, expressed the same views to me and emphasized his dismay over the attempted palace bombing on April 8th. He had told me earlier, as he had Ambassador Graham Martin, who paid him a secret visit a few days before the bombing, that he was having trouble controlling his angry anti-Thieu pilots. He and Martin talked about the advisability of having Thieu "step aside"—which is what Ky and various of his fellow-officers as well as the opposition politicians are continuing to urge—but the chief purpose of Martin's visit was to rein Ky in and prevent him from doing anything rash, and Ky reiterated that he had no such intention. He has made it clear, however, that if Thieu turns over the functions of government to others—at most, remaining as a figurehead—he himself would be willing to work for negotiations with the Communists (though they would probably not accept him in such a role).

Following the three-day March meeting of the heterogeneous opposition groups, their faction appeared to disintegrate, in typical South Vietnamese fashion. There were so many

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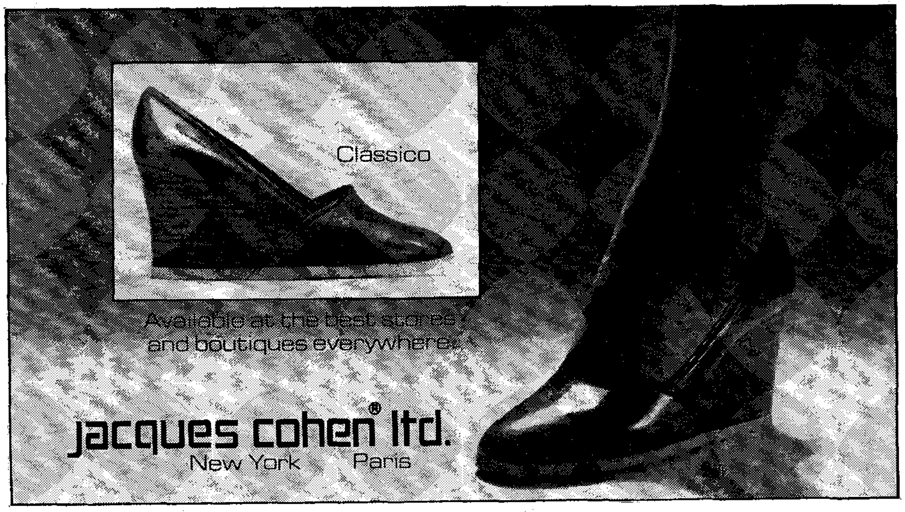


differences of opinion represented at these "seminars"—as they were euphemistically called—that no solid program emerged. Ky, meanwhile, has pressed on with his drive for coöperation with the generals, including the man who just resigned as Prime Minister and is himself a four-star general, Tran Thien Khiem. Khiem's resignation followed a showdown between him and Thieu in which Khiem said, in effect, that either he or Thieu had to go. Whether Ky and the generals and the politicians, even with the possible help of the Americans, can now bring sufficient pressure on Thieu to get him to quit remains problematical, but they intend to keep trying. Unfortunately, Vietnam never seems to change. There was a palace bombing back in February, 1962, by two dissident pilots trying to kill Ngo Dinh Diem and his brothers, and in the fall of 1963, just before the November coup against Diem, which the Americans supported, the palace guard, led by Diem's brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, conceived a weird plot to leave Saigon, turn over power temporarily to a group of their own choosing, and then, at the behest of that group, *return triumphantly to reassume command.* This two-step plot was labelled "Bravo One" and "Bravo Two," and today the members of Thieu's small inner entourage have been talking about the same sort of thing, even using the term "Bravo."

None of this, of course, will save South Vietnam from collapse. The only people who can negotiate with the Communists are men like Do or, if he proves unacceptable to them, like Senator Vu Van Mau, who heads the Buddhist National Reconciliation Force. I spoke with Do, who, though reluctant, is willing to play such a role at an opportune time. Mau, with whom I have spoken on several occasions in the past, is more than willing. He is closely associated with General Duong Van Minh, the former Chief of State, who is himself a possible candidate for the job of negotiator. Both he and Mau have occasionally been quoted by the Liberation Radio. At any rate, someone or some group will sooner or later have to move onstage and, without further futile American interference, prepare to conduct new peace talks. The job will not be an easy one, but there is little else that Saigon can look forward to at this point, and the quicker Thieu goes and the painful negotiating process can seriously begin, the more lives will be saved and the better things will be for all concerned.

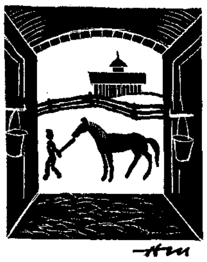
—ROBERT SHAPLEN

THE RACE TRACK

A Tip on the Wood

April 14

THE Wood Memorial Stakes comes up at Aqueduct this weekend, and this department, always an old pushover for a picture horse, picks Foolish Pleasure. Singh and Laramie Trail will have their followers, and there will be the usual tips on the other three-year-olds, but Foolish Pleasure will be the favorite in the betting—perhaps odds-on. He had a posh workout the other afternoon, and nothing impresses horseplayers more than that. Actually, hard-boiled horse-watchers were also impressed. Wearing bar plates (shoes with bars across the heels to protect his front feet, which had been hurt in the Florida Derby), the colt did a mile in 1:37—hardly sensational time, but first-rate under the circumstances. Vasquez, who rides Foolish Pleasure in his races and workouts, let him go his own slow gait for half a mile before increasing the speed, and he wound up doing the last quarter in 0:23⅘. (There's an old saying that a horse who can run the last quarter in twenty-four seconds will win most of his races.) Leroy Jolley, his trainer, says he'll take the bar plates off before the Wood. Fine. Always a handicap, they are a ball and chain if the track comes up mud.



WELL, Step Nicely did it again. For more than half of the Excelsior Handicap at Aqueduct last Saturday he galloped behind Gs Silver A, who did the first quarter in 0:23⅖ and the half mile in 0:47⅕ before fading and finishing last. Then, after a brief encounter with Jolly Johu, Step Nicely took command, but he went wide on the turn into the stretch and had to go all out to win by a neck from Monetary Principle, to whom he gave sixteen pounds. Jolly Johu, to whom he gave seven, was third. The time for the mile and a furlong was 1:48⅖—nothing to wave a small flag about, but enough to leave people wondering about Step Nicely's prospects. It was his fifth consecutive victory. If memory serves, his best race as a three-year-old was the Jerome Handicap at Belmont, in which he beat Forego, with Linda's Chief third. He ran only four times as a four-year-old, winning twice, and didn't show much in Florida this winter until he won an allowance race just before coming to New York. But Allen Jerkens, his trainer, has always liked him, and has brought him along—with that allowance race at six furlongs, the Roseben at seven, the Westchester Handicap at one mile, and the Excelsior at nine furlongs—to the top of the list. Jolly Johu looked as good as he had when he won the John B. Campbell Handicap at Bowie in March, but I was surprised at the dull performance of Mongongo, who had won the Rancocas and Trenton Handicaps at Garden State Park.

IT'S a tossup, until all the statistics are in, as to who the season's big winner was at Santa Anita, which just closed. Attendance was around two million and betting in the mutuels was big, but it costs a lovely dollar to run the meeting in its accustomed style, so I'd say that the real winner was Charlie Whittingham, who saddled the winners of four races with purses in six figures (trainers don't do that very often) and of ever so many fifty-thousand- and twenty-five-thousand-dollar events. He wound up with La Zanzara taking the $125,000 San Juan Capistrano Handicap by a head from Astray, who took it last year. Stardust Mel, the star of Whittingham's stable, was third. It was Whittingham's sixth Capistrano. (His other winners were Corn Husker in 1957, Royal Living in 1959, Fiddle Isle in 1970, Cougar II in 1971, and Practicante in 1972.) I'm told that it was a cold, gray, and damp day, and that the mile-and-three-quarters turf course was almost a morass. La Zanzara, the only mount of her sex in the field of twelve, didn't begin to pick up the leaders till the last half mile, and headed Astray only a few strides from the winning post. British-bred, she had raced in Italy before Aaron Jones bought her, two years ago.

FOR the record, the $100,000 (added) race-of-the-week was Gulfstream Park's Pan American Handicap, at a mile and a half, which was supposed to be run on the grass but was run on the main track because of rain. Buffalo Lark splashed home the winner, with London Company second and Duke Tom third.

—Audax Minor

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

APRIL 12

IN his State of the World address to a joint session of the Senate and the House two evenings ago, the President outlined what an adviser a few hours earlier had said would be "the Gerald Ford foreign policy." Except for requesting a large increase in non-military aid, it sounded very much like the Lyndon Johnson-Richard Nixon foreign policy. For one thing, more than three-quarters of the sum he requested—almost one billion dollars—was for arms. He also asked congressional approval for using American troops to evacuate American personnel and as many South Vietnamese citizens as possible who wished haven. He told Congress and the world that he wanted "swift" action—meaning, he explained, within nine days. Everyone knows that this deadline will not be met, and few think that military appropriations or approval for using American troops (the latter being a pro-forma request, at least concerning the evacuation of Americans from South Vietnam, since any President has the authority to provide armed escorts for citizens whose lives may be endangered) will be granted at all. Most people suspect that the President himself was under no illusions about this, and was speaking mainly for the record. Indeed, he conceded that it may be "too late" to save Cambodia, for whose government he has asked almost a quarter-billion dollars. The writers of the speech, led in eminence by Henry Kissinger, turned out a spiritless hour of exhortation, with an almost unbroken string of bromides: "We live in a time of testing . . . we build from a solid foundation . . . solemn prayers . . . tonight is a time for straight talk among friends." It was notable that the Southeast Asia passages, constituting about half the speech, drew only one round of applause—mostly from the Republican side of the aisle, and a good deal less than deafening. In a rare and recently unprecedented occurrence, one member of the House hissed when the President spoke of military aid, and he and a colleague walked out. Two veteran supporters of Administration policy—Senators Henry M. Jackson, of Washington, and Robert C. Byrd, of West Virginia—opposed using American troops for the evacuation of Vietnamese citizens. Senator Byrd said he did favor troop action to provide safe passage for Americans.

Ford's speech climaxed a week in which Vietnam has been at the forefront of consciousness here for the first time in several months. Through most of the winter and early spring, it was, of course, apparent that the non-Communist regimes in Cambodia and South Vietnam were doomed. Many newspaper correspondents and politicians had written obituary articles and speeches, and filed them for future use. Few, however, thought that the final collapse was quite as near as it now appears to be. As recently as three weeks ago, the most knowledgeable and disinterested students of military affairs gave Cambodia a month or two, and South Vietnam a few months more than that. It is, to be sure, still possible that the titular authorities in both countries will be able to hold on to a few coastal enclaves and proclaim their legitimacy after ceding nearly all their territory. It is possible, too, that some currently uninvolved power—perhaps France, which has announced its readiness to do what it can to mediate—will find a place in some coalition regime for officials of the Lon Nol and Nguyen Van Thieu governments, but it seems improbable that they will ever again make policy or command armed forces. Hanoi might find it in its own interest to enlist such prestige as the Lon Nol and Thieu officials still command among the Cambodians and South Vietnamese. In any case, the war is—in a phrase once frequently heard here—"winding down" at a thundering speed.

Had the events of recent months taken place at any time between 1960 and the early months of this year, this city would have been a highly distressed area. The National Security Council would have been in round-the-clock sessions; Congress would have had no Easter recess; military missions would have been dispatched to the war fronts. Nothing of the sort has happened, or has even been seriously proposed. (The only thing resembling a military mission was the one-man canvass of the situation by Army Chief of Staff Frederick Weyand, who reported to the President last week.) While muttering pieties about our "obligations" and "commitments," Henry Kissinger has—quite properly, in the eyes of most people here—been almost single-mindedly concerned with what now seems the nearly inevitable outbreak of war in the Middle East. While disaster in both parts of the world was in the making, the President did not see fit to cut short his vacation in California, where he issued his own pieties from the La Quinta golf course. The word "crisis," so frequently on the lips of everyone in earlier stages of the war, was rarely encountered. Two weeks ago, when one South Vietnamese province after another was falling, the principal topic of conversation here was the brutal wind that swept the entire Northeast. Whenever Vietnam was mentioned, the concern was not the imminence of a Communist victory but the plight of the refugees—the kind of concern that no doubt should have been uppermost in the minds of our leaders for several years. It seems to be a case of all passion spent, of a common realization that our outrage has been misdirected as well as futile. There are only a few people—mainly those more radical veterans of the anti-war movement who some time back concluded that a Communist victory was preferable to a Washington-Saigon one—who rejoice in the prospect of North Vietnamese dominance. Most opponents of the war have felt for years that there was little, if anything, to choose between the kind of terror practiced by North Vietnam and that practiced by South Vietnam; still, they know that it is hardly a blessing for anyone allied with us to be left to the mercy of the Communist chieftains. In the light of the evidence now available, it seems unlikely that the "bloodbath" so authoritatively predicted years ago is about to take place; however, there can be little doubt that Hanoi will deal ruthlessly with anyone it feels may still have some potential for endangering its security. (South Vietnam would surely behave similarly if it won the war. President Thieu has propounded the curious theory that unless the American people "do something for

the people of South Vietnam," they will prove themselves "traitors." If the people of one sovereign nation can commit treason against another by action or inaction, then all Americans who have fought or opposed totalitarian regimes must be regarded as having betrayed several foreign countries.)

Aside from the problems posed by the refugees, it is the fate of the military and civilian leaders of South Vietnam that most occupies the attention of people here. Thanks to the folly of our original intervention, many South Vietnamese—some out of conviction, but others certainly out of venality or gullibility—aligned themselves with us and are, it may be assumed, about to suffer the consequences of their rashness. A realization of this has led Sir Robert Thompson, the British authority on, and practitioner of, guerrilla warfare, to upbraid us for what he regards as the callousness of our approach. He has recently written, "Blessed . . . are the excuse-makers, for they have destroyed the credibility of the United States. It is, so they say, only a corrupt, repressive regime in Saigon. But in that case why are the poor people of Vietnam fleeing yet again from the Communists? Millions are voting with their feet. What has happened to all those lovely newspaper stories that the refugees fled only from American bombing?" To his "Why?" the principal answer would seem to be that these unfortunate people are victims of our government's and their own government's propaganda. A few bourgeois entrepreneurs may be among those trying to escape, and it is not unlikely that Hanoi would give them a hard time, but it is difficult to imagine why a Communist regime would wish to deal harshly with hundreds of thousands of ordinary people, whose only crime was being on the wrong, or losing, side. Hitler and Stalin butchered millions, but Hitler did so out of his crackpot theories of eugenics, while Stalin let the kulaks perish because they would not go along with the collectivization of Russian agriculture. The Hanoi Communists are not, as far as is known, dogmatic Marxist-Leninists. To our credit, we are doing what we can to help out, but what we can is severely limited by our past policies and unbending attitudes; thus, in a sense, the refugees are fleeing from us.

Thompson shares the view of several American Presidents that an abandonment of our "commitment" in South Vietnam will be seen throughout the world as a sign of American cowardliness and fickleness. "Israel," he has

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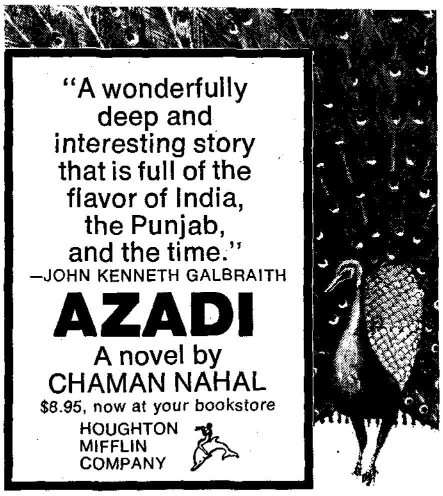

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written, "realizes that an American President's guarantee is worthless." How he knows this he neglects to explain. To most people here, the opposite appears to be the truth. Our "guarantee" to South Vietnam weakened us immensely—militarily, politically, economically. Had we never made it, we would not have been associated with an abandoned cause, nor would we have lost so much of our confidence in the rightness of the American mission in the world. (It certainly did the French nothing but good to clear out of Indo-China.) However that may be, the Israelis continue to solicit our support—moral as well as industrial. Most of our traditional allies have for years been imploring us to cut our losses in Vietnam precisely so that we could lend a hand to those countries whose national security is vital to our own.

It may be that Thompson is right in a sense he did not intend. Our experience in Vietnam has changed us in many ways. Sympathetic as most Americans are toward Israel, anti-war sentiment—that is, the view that *no* wars are defensible—is perhaps higher than it has ever been in any Western nation, and is not much short of universal among the young. A majority of the people, if one judges by the sentiments of their spokesmen in Congress, is skeptical of all commitments. Even foreign economic aid, once so popular and so seemingly noble, has been revealed as a possible road to war ("protecting our investments") and, in certain receiving countries, as an encouragement of nationalism. (Some historians have always seen protection of our investments as the villain in Vietnam; that is, they feel that our efforts to make South Vietnam a kind of showcase of democracy in Asia led us to respond with arms when the showcase was threatened by the Vietcong.) Fortunately, it would seem, we have developed some capacity for distinguishing between the kind of aid that is likely to compromise our policies and the kind that does not. Few voices now are raised in protest against the Administration's requests for aid to the victims of the war; on the contrary, there are many opponents of our policies who fault the President for requesting too little and for the easy way he has played on the sentiments of a family-oriented society by emphasizing the plight of the orphans above that of other sufferers. (It requires an addiction to some devil theory of history to believe that the Communists would discriminate against homeless children.) But economic aid is another matter,

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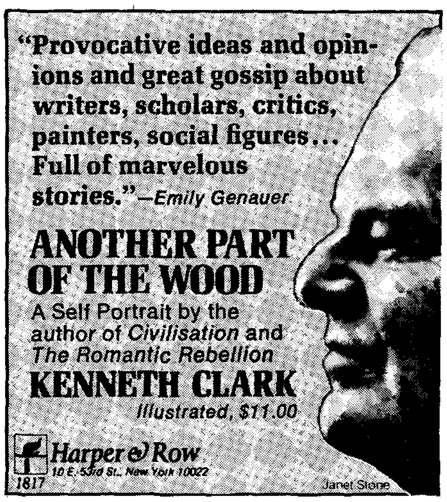

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and it may well be that our fear that it would somehow or other draw us into war will prevent us from lending a hand in many just causes—among them Israel's desire to continue to exist as a sovereign state in the Middle East.

WITH the possible exception of the Civil War, Vietnam has been the biggest trauma in our history. As the nature of our society and our politics changed after that great earlier conflict, so it may change again after this squalid one. Such words as "commitment" and "obligation," rendered ridiculous by the uses to which they have been put, may be restored to their former dignity. It may sometime be possible to formulate a new concept of national interest and base upon it a more rational foreign policy. Supporters of the war in Vietnam often characterized their opponents as "isolationists," and predicted that if we disengaged in Vietnam, we would disengage everywhere. This seems most unlikely. The strongest critics of the Administration's Southeast Asia policies have been dedicated internationalists and have opposed American policy on solid international grounds, the principal one being that the war was rendering it impossible—morally and economically—for this country to make any serious contribution to the global community. Most of those who have opposed foreign aid in recent years have done so not because they regarded it as wrong in itself but because they feared the political and military consequences; the way to avoid these consequences might be international aid, through the United Nations or some concert of powers. Perhaps a new definition of national security could lead to a new role for the armed services. At any rate, we seem to be, as politicians so often put it, at the end of an era.

—RICHARD H. ROVERE

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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

CELEBRATION, by Harvey Swados (Simon & Schuster). This novel was the last that Mr. Swados wrote before his untimely death two years ago. It is not a very good novel, but it is such a thoughtful and humane one, with so many interesting things to say about (among other matters) radical and liberal thinking, hero worship, vanity, and old age, that it is enjoyable despite its failings. It is written in the form of a diary. The diarist, Sam Lumen, is a famous nonagenarian, a sort of cross between Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, and Bruno Bettelheim, whose well-meaning young wife and various friends and relations all hover about him so closely that he feels used and trapped. In one corner, his wife, his protégé, and his lawyer are pushing him to allow a children's center to be named after him, to be interviewed on TV, and, in general, to go along peacefully with various plans to beatify him; in the other corner are his male secretary and a young relative (possibly his long-lost son), who want him to disavow all that and give his public blessing to a somewhat foolish but well-meaning young radical group called the Children of Liberty. In a sense, the subject of the book is how a lucid, open, rather stubborn mind, given to finding radical solutions to social problems, comes to terms with diminishing faculties, flattery, and the conservative impulses of old age. The trappings are a little stagy and the writing more than a little didactic, but Lumen's canny ditherings and rather fierce charm compensate for the lack of polish.

GENERAL

A TIME TO DIE, by Tom Wicker (Quadrangle). On a September Friday in 1971, the author, a *Times* political columnist, was called from a posh Washington luncheon to an obscure hamlet in upstate New York. The town was Attica, the site of a prison where twelve hundred and eighty-one inmates had rebelled, taken forty of their jailers as hostages, gained control of two prison yards, and were requesting neutral "observers" to appear on the scene. Mr. Wicker, who writes of himself in the third person—a narrative device that succeeds in its aim of making the author a participant in, but not the star of, a heartrending story—did not know why he was chosen, or what he was expected to do, but he went. This book, as clear and honest as he can make it (and very well written), tells what he saw, learned, and felt. Most readers will recall, at least in outline, the course of events: the prisoners and the prison administration, via the observers, arguing back and forth; the negotiations becoming deadlocked; Governor Rockefeller refusing either to come to the scene or to stay the violence that the state was ready to use; and the rebellion being forcibly put down. The reader learns, along with Mr. Wicker, about conditions in the prison—why the prisoners felt morally justified in their revolt—but the book is not a tract on prison reform. It is a deeply affecting record of the author's realization of what we are all supposed to know—that men who commit crimes are not necessarily wholly evil. Of the prisoners he came to know, some were simple victims and others genuinely tragic heroes. A Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

IMPORTANT TO ME: A PERSONAL RECORD, by Pamela Hansford Johnson (Scribners). The novelist has set down, instead of a connected autobiography, recollections, portraits, descriptions, and opinions accumulated during an active and frequently difficult or unhappy life. Lady Snow, as the author now is, overcame by her own efforts poverty and personal suffering to attain such rewards as a good marriage, thriving children, and professional recognition. Why, then, do her comments on the present sound either complacent or aggrieved? It is strange that someone who has come through so much should seem so unsympathetic to new difficulties that beset the world. It is fair to add, though, that some passages of remembering (Dylan Thomas, Ivy Compton-Burnett) are very good indeed.

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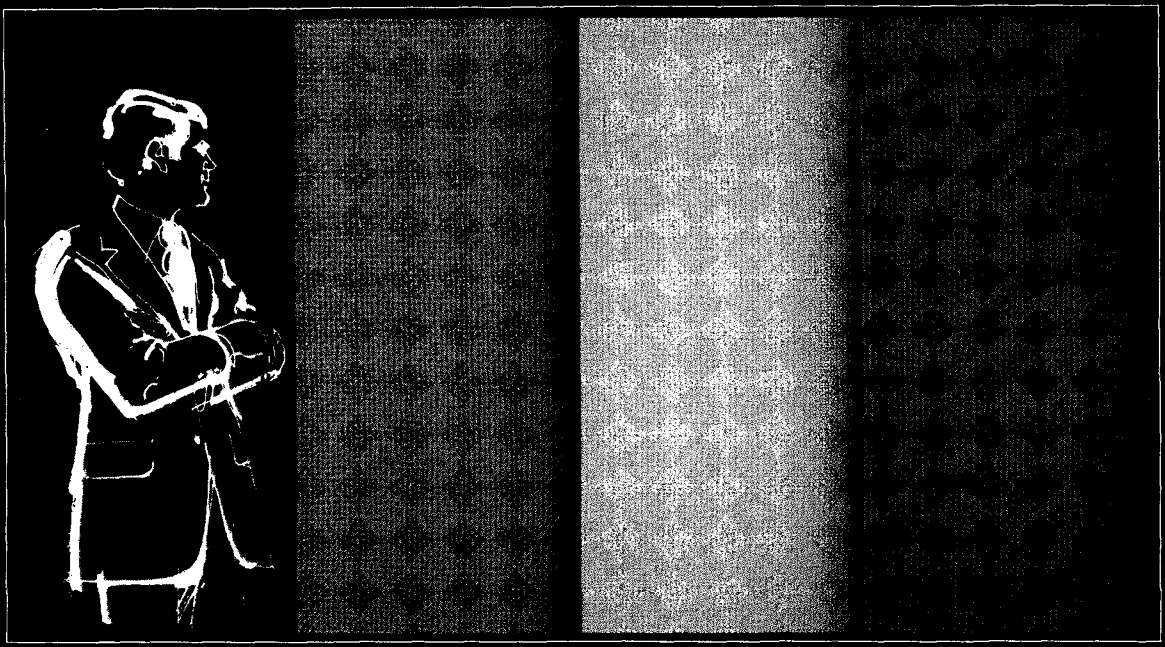

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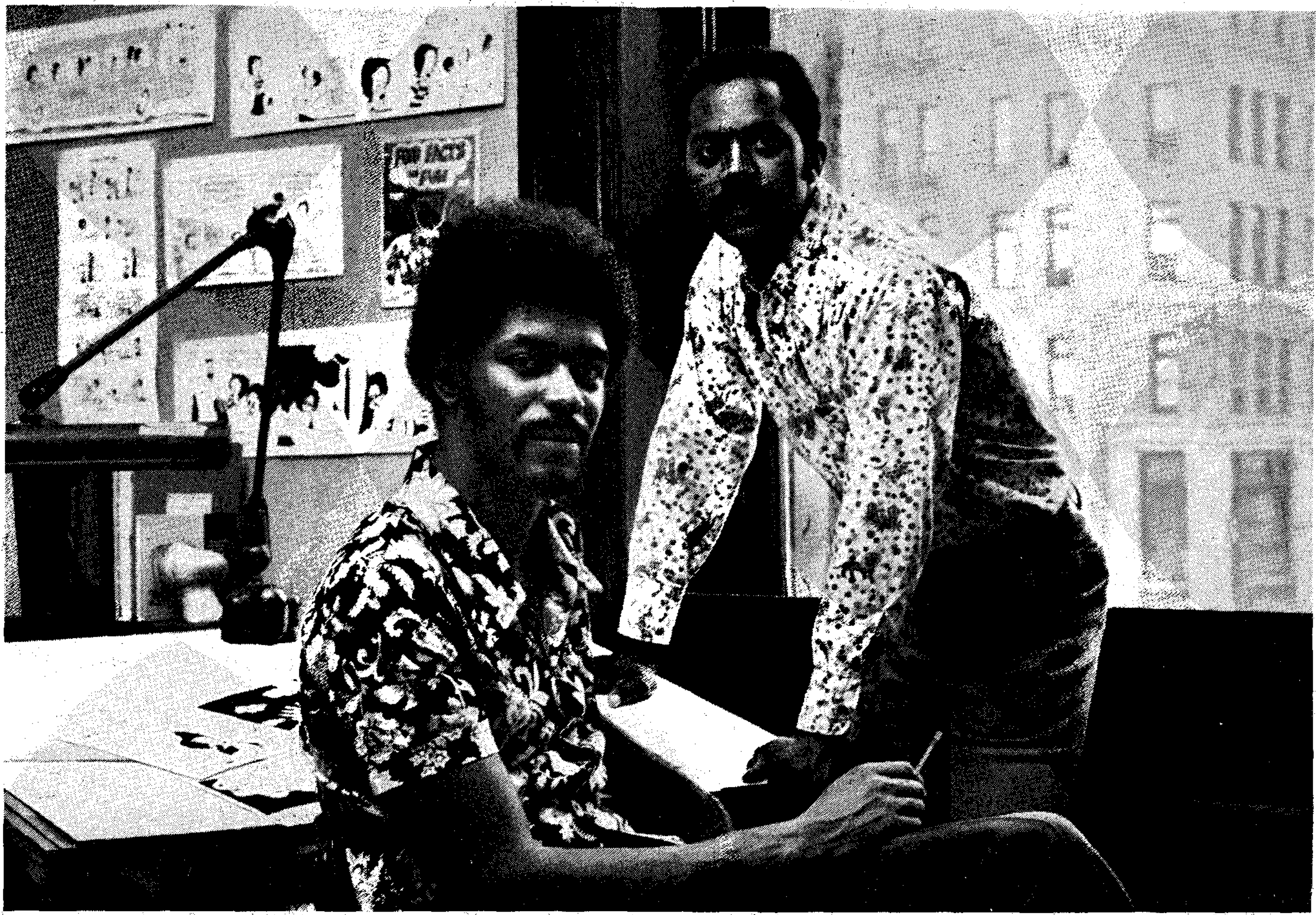

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